



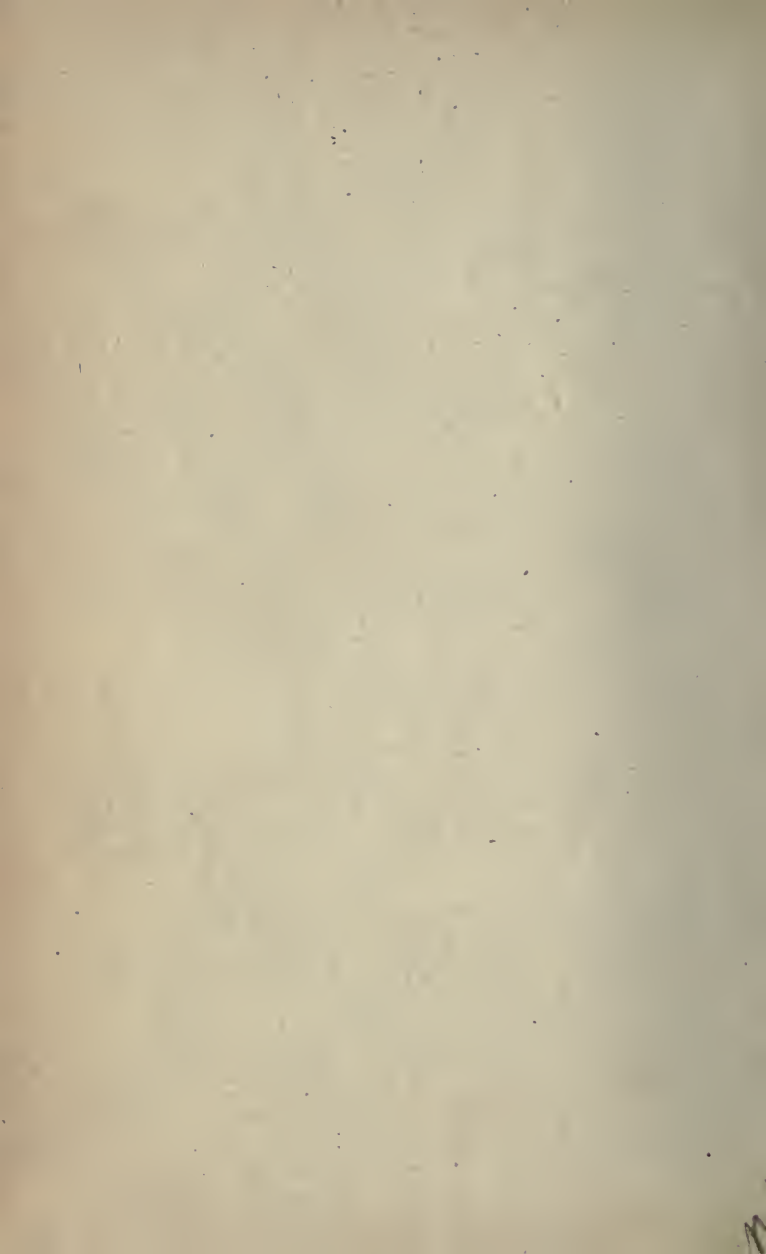


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MY MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCES.

ALEXANDER STRAHAN AND CO.

*London,* . . . . . 32, *Ludgate Hill.*  
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# MY MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCES

BY THE

REV. DR. BÜCHSEL

BERLIN

LONDON

ALEXANDER STRAHAN AND CO.

1863.

EDINBURGH . T. CONSTABLE,  
PRINTER TO THE QUEEN, AND TO THE UNIVERSITY

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## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IT was always my wish to find time to arrange and write down my ministerial experiences, in the form of contributions to practical theology; but on the other hand I considered it wrong to neglect any of my sacred duties in order to prepare these for the press, nor, indeed, did I feel any call or capability for such a task. Nevertheless, my dear and honoured friend, Professor Hengstenberg, insisted upon my allowing these sketches to appear in the *Evangelical Ecclesiastical Journal*, and the gratitude I owed that periodical induced me to yield the point. I hoped that they might serve to encourage and console some of my younger brethren in the ministry, my own sons among the number; but it never occurred to me that such reminiscences would gain admittance into a wider circle, and I was very reluctant to allow their publication in a separate form. I do not, however, deny that it has been a pleasure and advantage to myself to retrace God's dealings with me. We are indeed great losers if we fail diligently to bring to our remembrance the gracious leading of Provi-

dence in our own case. Faith springs, doubtless, from God's word, but the experiences of life are the best commentary upon Holy Scripture.

To divide one's time properly between parish and family claims is a difficult matter for a pastor with a large cure of souls, and as conscience has often reproached me with having seen too little my dear children, I have hoped to make them some slight compensation by this little volume. The young pastors of the present day have in some respects an easier duty to perform than fell to my share. The deeper emotions that political storms have stirred in men's minds have rendered them more susceptible of religious influence, but this only increases the minister's responsibility. The louder the voice of God's judgments, the more unstable all temporal circumstances, the wider must the Church open her gates, and 'constrain men to come in.' Woe to that servant whom the Lord finds sleeping at a time like this!

The conflict now going on in the Lutheran Church can only be brought to a favourable issue by new life in the community. But the Church's future lies in the hands of that Lord who bought it with his own blood. Our part must be to bear up against fear or anxiety, to maintain the truth, and not to forget in the struggles of the day our own personal struggle with flesh and blood. The government of the Church rests in the pierced hands of the Saviour, and how-



ever wonderful and incomprehensible they may appear to us, his thoughts concerning it shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. And his thoughts are thoughts of peace !

*Palm Sunday, 1861.*

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The unexpectedly rapid sale of the first edition has led to the appearance of another, in which no alterations have been made, time having failed me to enlarge or improve it. I commit the little work therefore once more to the indulgence of my readers, and I pray God to be with them all, so that they may grow in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ !

DR. BÜCHSEL.

BERLIN, 8th August 1861.



MY MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCES.



## FIRST YEAR.

IT was on a Saturday evening, before the eighth Sunday after Trinity, that a young man of four-and-twenty might have been seen standing on a hill commanding a view of the village of P——; the boy who carried his effects—a few books and clothes merely—sitting meanwhile on a stone at a little distance. The young man stood still and looked long at the large village that lay there before him, with its church and tower. That village was to be his new home. He had left behind his pleasant university career; his bright and happy youth; more, he had left behind a parents' house, with its atmosphere of peace, and deep, heartfelt, family affection. The prospect now before him was that of acting as assistant to the old and infirm pastor of P——.

The day was warm; richly laden corn-fields stretched out on all sides, and the reapers, in the sweat of their brows, were busy laying low the golden ears of wheat. The sun went down. Anxiety and timid

apprehension, high aspiration and hope, alternated in the young man's mind. The Scripture does, indeed, magnify the high calling of the minister; but how fraught with difficulties it is! Yet, truly, the life of man were valueless but for its labour and effort. The inhabitants, then, of those houses before him were the field in which he was to toil; and he was to give an account of his work done to the Lord of the Church. His heart grew so full, he could contain himself no longer. He sent the boy on down the hill, and having ascertained that he could kneel unobserved beside the stone, he poured out his soul to the Lord in silent prayer; and experienced somewhat of that intercession which St. Paul describes as made for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Praise and thanksgiving to God for his gracious leading hitherto; prayer and supplication for an open and attentive ear, a humble and obedient heart, to follow the Divine voice henceforth—these shared his spirit between them. For indeed prayer and thanksgiving are ever corresponding forces in the Christian's heart, and only he who can sincerely thank God can sincerely pray to him.

Before he reached the village, he had overtaken the boy. The first inhabitant to whom he could reach out his hand was a child of seven. Willingly would he have pressed the little fellow to his heart in very deed, as he did in spirit. As he approached the parsonage, the pastor came out and gave him a kind

and cordial greeting. He was conducted to the room destined for him, which looked to the churchyard with its graves. Soon came in the old sacristan to learn what hymns he was pleased to appoint for the morrow ; and the stranger was much gratified when the old man expressed his hearty good wishes, blended as they were with a certain tinge of admonition, since they wound up by the words, ‘The Lord giveth grace to the humble.’ Whenever the heart is very deeply stirred, and a man feels that he has reached one of the turning-points of his life, he is peculiarly susceptible of the influence of God’s word. Its authority is as a firmly-rooted stem, to which the weak plant delights to cling. At the sound of these words of the living God, peace seemed breathed within his troubled spirit. The old sacristan was dismissed with hearty thanks, and a request for his friendly co-operation.

The household went very early to bed, for all were tired with the labours of the harvest ; the pastor having a pretty large farm in his own hands. But the young assistant found it impossible to compose himself to sleep. He gently opened the parsonage door, and a few steps led him to the churchyard, from which he could survey the whole well-built village. The full moon was shining on the other side of the church. Standing on the tombstone of a former minister, he could get a view of the pulpit within. The whole village seemed asleep, with the exception of

a dim light in one small cottage window. 'To-morrow thou wilt stand within that pulpit, and the inhabitants of those houses will all be sitting before thee. Wilt thou awake those sleepers?' This question at once bent his knee in the dust. His first evening prayer was fervent and sincere. 'The sins of the minister hinder the course of God's word;' so said an old preacher at the close of his life; and, accordingly, the prayer for the congregation ended in a prayer for my own poor soul,—for I was that young man, and I felt that it was a difficult thing indeed to be a good pastor.

The next morning I rose early. My carefully composed sermon was over and over again impressed upon my memory. About seven o'clock, the old sacristan came riding up in state to the parsonage to conduct me to the chapel-of-ease. The pastor's old servant, who had lived with him nearly thirty years, and managed all household affairs, brought a horse for me from the stable. We both rode, accordingly, all through the long village street, and I was pleased to observe that the sacristan received friendly greetings from old and young. But he took off his hat to no one, only acknowledged their civility by a wave of his hand, and when he saw me take off mine, admonished me not to spoil the people. About two miles and a half brought us to the chapel-of-ease. The school-master, a man in the prime of life, took my horse and led him to the stable. The sacristan went at once into



the church, rang the bell, and wrote out the numbers of the hymns. The churchyard was untidy, the church itself dirty, and out of all the community only four men came to the service, not one woman, nor one child. Even the schoolmaster, with whom we had left our horses, seemed too much occupied with secular affairs to think much about coming to church. 'There will be no communion service here,' the old sacristan said; so, after having sung a few verses almost alone, I went at once into the pulpit, and began my sermon. I own that it was a severe shock to the 'old man' within me. Not even curiosity had brought people to church! My discourse was not appropriate to such an occasion. I had to leave out a good deal, and delivered the rest badly enough. Such was the beginning I made. I felt very uncomfortable, and rode back in silence by the side of my old friend the sacristan, who told me that he and the pastor had often returned without holding any service at all, no one having come to the chapel.

In the Mother Church service began at ten o'clock. As we rode through the village, my companion was much pleased to observe several men standing about their doors, apparently prepared to go to church. In the parsonage itself, indeed, a great wash had been going on, and the maids were still busy hanging linen out to dry. The bell began to ring. I went to church with a humbled heart, accompanied by the old pastor. There were but

few people gathered there. When I had reached the pulpit, and was just about to begin, a country lad, who sat in the gallery, and remarked that I had laid my manuscript on the cushion before me, said, quite audibly, 'Oh, so he reads, then!' I pushed the manuscript away, and began my sermon upon false prophets, but the greater part of the congregation dropped off at once to sleep, and but few kept up appearances sufficiently to sleep without letting their heads drop on their breasts. During dinner, the pastor observed to his daughters that the church had been very well attended, and that some were there who had not been for a long time previously. Every now and then I heard instances of the people's perversity and misconduct, which made my heart sink more and more. I went to my own room, sat down on one of my two chairs, and positively wept. Towards evening I went out, looked around me, and perplexed myself as to what I was to do next. I was very sorry that I had studied theology. Every calling in life seemed better than a preacher's. I had no faith for prayer that day. It was a dark season indeed.

On the Monday I was up early, because I could not rest. First I read the gospel for the next Sunday, and anxiously planned my next discourse. I saw from my window that the children went to school about six o'clock, and a longing to see and speak with the old sacristan impelled me to pay the school a visit. There were more than a hundred children

assembled in the large room, all sitting perfectly still in their places, for the teacher and his aged wife insisted upon order and quiet. As six struck on the neighbouring steeple, the word was given: 'Stand up to pray.' Loudly began the children to sing, or rather shriek, a few verses of the hymn, 'O God, the Lord of heaven and earth;' and then the first boy proceeded to repeat Luther's Morning Prayer in a quite careless unthinking way, the next boy doing the same, then the third, and so on. After that, the five principal clauses of the Catechism were got through with marvellous rapidity and confidence, each pupil taking up a sentence in turn, while the others moved their lips to show that they were following. During the writing lesson I spoke to a few of the children, but not an answer could I extract from any. It seemed as though they did not understand my dialect. Meanwhile the teacher was making some of the smaller children read, and learn their letters in the old horn-book. He sat in a large chair, and I could see him strike his pupils, and scold them in very harsh language. At eight o'clock the school broke up. Hymn, prayer, and Catechism as before; a sentence and a few verses given out for the week, and each child threatened with punishment if it did not learn its task before the Saturday came round. The younger children had shorter lessons given them, with directions to make their mothers repeat these over and over again till

they had got them by heart. I then found myself alone with the master, and should have been well pleased if he had commented on my discourse of the day before ; but it never seemed to occur to him. As I passed through the village, some children looked smilingly at me ; so I went up to them and held out my hand, upon which they all ran away. The grown people did certainly acknowledge my presence, but evidently they had no time for speaking to me.

Without exactly knowing why, I betook myself again to the school on the following day, and as, at its breaking up, the master announced that he had to go to town on the morrow, and that, consequently, the school would not meet, I offered to take his place. He looked at me doubtfully, and the children inquisitively ; but after some consideration, he agreed to my plan, threatening, however, the most tremendous punishment to any child who should misbehave in his absence.

On Wednesday morning I was the earliest in the schoolroom. The little boy that I had first met on the evening of my arrival, was one of the early comers, and I asked his name. He seemed a good deal surprised that I should not know it, but did at length bring out his Christian name. I managed the school as I had seen it done.

It was the school that first gained for me an entrance into the houses. A boy, who had been regular in his attendance, was missing one morning, and I

heard that he was ill. It seemed to me only natural that I should pay him a visit; but his parents were apparently astonished at my calling to inquire for him. He was very ill, and I recommended both him and his parents to pray to the Lord, but had not the courage myself to pray with them. Very soon I found other occasions—chiefly connected with the school—for calling at different houses. The old sacristan was much pleased with me, and declared that the attendance at school improved. The children began by degrees to look at me more and more good-naturedly as I went about the village, and some would even reach out their hands. It was plain, too, that the parents took to me when they saw that I was interested in their children. As to mere numbers, the attendance at church improved, but the faces remained unmoved and sleepy during the service.

Meanwhile, I laboured anxiously and assiduously in the matter of preaching. Even on the Sunday evenings I began to concern myself about the next Sunday's sermon, and the thought of it haunted me throughout the week. All other men had at least one day of rest; there was none for me. In the early part of the week I wrote much—wrote quantities; scratched out, put in, improved day by day. On Friday I gave up all my time to writing out my sermon, and on Saturday I learnt it by heart; but do what I would, it was a dry and tedious affair, or at all events it made no impression on the congregation.

On the following Sunday I chose this subject : Good succeeding evil : first comes sorrow for sin, then faith ; first the strife, then the victory ; first the cross, then the crown. It appeared to me that the people were a little more attentive than usual ; but no sooner had I finished my last sentence, than up rose the old pastor, who went to the altar and began—‘ From the mouth of a young and inexperienced man you have indeed heard that good succeeds evil, but I for my part tell you that evil succeeds good ; for after youth comes age ; after life, death ; after joy, sorrow.’ And then he proceeded to paint the misery of mankind in such vivid colours, and so completely from the life, that the whole congregation was roused, and the women wept aloud. As for me, I felt indeed a good deal annoyed, to think that my whole discourse, the result of a whole week’s hard labour, should be thus nullified ; but at the same time I saw that there was, after all, some way of getting at these people. The old sacristan afterwards observed, ‘ That’s the diet for them.’ As to the gospel, the true source of comfort, there was not a hint of that. The discourse ended with the funeral procession and the grave,—not one word was spoken of the higher life beyond.

The next week was for me an irksome and gloomy one. I went indeed as usual to the school ; but the next Sunday’s sermon lay like a hundredweight upon my spirits. In the course of my lonely walks, there

was a little lake that I often came upon. One evening I stood on its shore, and contemplated its calm, clear mirror, but there was no peace within my heart. A man passed me by with a net, and I asked him whether he had caught anything ; but he answered roughly, ‘Not I ; there are plenty of fish to be had here, but I don’t know rightly how to set about it.’ ‘I, too, don’t know rightly how to set about it,’ an inner voice kept repeating the whole of my homeward way. Certainly, I felt that I had spared neither time nor trouble, but yet the conviction that I was not up to my work took such firm hold of me that I could not throw it off. Where did I fail ? I had studied homily writing industriously, and at my examination had come off with applause in this particular. Neither had I ever been rationalistic in my tendencies ; my mother was peculiarly pious, and my father orthodox. From my youth up I had had an unqualified respect for the Word of God. The excellent Neander had been my instructor at the university. I was sincerely and strongly dogmatic ; indeed, the old pastor used to say mine was a mediæval theology. I began more and more anxiously to suspect that I had never been really called and fitted for the ministry ; and my resolve was firmly taken, rather to gain my bread by manual labour, than to be one of that too numerous class of pastors who live upon the benefice indeed, but do no good among the people. In the anguish



of my heart I sat down to write to my father ; but, as usual, I only received a very laconic answer. Upon this occasion it ran thus :—‘ My son, I rejoice to find, from thy letter, that thou art in the right way. First of all, vanity must be broken down.’ Vanity ! I had never once thought of that. However, I soon came to confess to myself that, with regard to preaching, I had been more anxious about my own credit than the glory of God or the souls of the people. With a deep and regretful sense of their general neglect of Church ordinances, had mingled the persuasion that I was the man to bring them all round. The first feeling was right enough, the second was a delusion ; for if the Word of God is to be the means of salvation, it is essential that its efficacy should not be hindered by any sin of the preacher. The purest water flowing through a dirty pipe contracts its taste and stain, and is not fit to be drunk. Vanity must be broken down, else labour is in vain, and orthodoxy brings no blessing. Only in the case of a minister vanity can so readily disguise itself ! Success in the ministry and personal credit are so intimately blended, it is no easy matter to distinguish between the two ; and the attempt to please all men is readily justified under the pretence of endearing to them the Word of God. The vanity of the natural man is always a difficult thing to subdue, but difficult above all for those who have to announce to others the tidings of salvation.



During my university career, I had been in the daily habit of reading my German Bible ; but I was now led to consider more closely those great prophets and apostles whom the Lord had used as instruments ; and I soon perceived that their skill and success in their Master's work arose from their being themselves purified and refined, and so made fit organs of the Holy Spirit. This struck me more especially with respect to the Apostle Peter. First, the Lord leads him to confession, to full acknowledgment of unworthiness—extorts the cry, ' I am a sinful man ;' then constrains him to bear witness to the faith, that Jesus is the Son of God ; and finally questions him as to the amount of love he feels for his Master. But what is love but self-denial and complete self-surrender to Christ and his service ?

I was often tempted to envy those ministers who were calm or even indifferent as to the result of their sermons ; and yet I was firmly resolved not to eat the bread of the Church without working hard in her service. I tried to console myself by saying that the influence of preaching is unseen ; but that was fallacious comfort ; for the Church is, after all, visible, and faith must be manifested in works. I had no one to whom I could tell my sorrows ; no one who would, I felt sure, understand and feel for me. My own spiritual condition began to appear very questionable. I sought after the keenness of Peter's repentance ; afflicted myself with the recollections

of my sins of every kind ; and shuddered at the thought that my faith must be a dead faith, since I was so deficient in those inward experiences familiar to other Christians. And yet, in the background of my soul, as it were, there still lurked the thought that, after all, I had remained pure from all gross sins ; that I had never neglected my religious duties, and could not, therefore, be quite undeserving : in short, the blood and righteousness of Christ were not my one and only consolation. The relation between justification and sanctification was anything but clear to me. I wished, indeed, to enjoy the fruits of faith, but did not seek after the gift of faith itself. I wanted to repent, and to believe in my own strength ; to love the Lord without his help ; for that these graces depended upon the work of the Holy Spirit, and were only to be obtained by prayer, was still to me a truth unknown. And thus I was seeking to teach others the way of salvation, while I myself was ignorant of it ! If at that time I had only had Arnd's *True Christianity*, or Scriver's *Spiritual Treasury*, or the Sermons of Starke and Valerius Herberger, how soon I should have been set right ! The young pastors of the present day are fortunate in having these precious works rescued from oblivion, and can meet with Christian fellowship much more readily than I could. It was Luther's Shorter Catechism that first set me on the right track, especially that glorious declaration of the

third article, 'I believe that I am unable, in my own understanding or strength, to believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or to come to him.' The old sacristan, who did not deal much in exclusive points of doctrine, used to add to this, the verse in which the Lord says that our heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit *to them who ask him*. I began, accordingly, to pray for the Holy Spirit, who should work in me true repentance and living faith; and I soon discovered that reflecting upon one's self and one's condition, and being enlightened by the Holy Spirit in both particulars, were two very different things. Gradually prayer ceased to be a duty, and became a real necessity of my heart. The Word of God, which I had of late been in the habit of reading with constant reference to my sermons, and which I was wont to apply rather to the congregation than to myself, now began to smite my own soul by its threats, and to cheer it by its promises. The grace and love of God often rose before me in such grandeur and power, that sometimes my vain and presumptuous heart was ready to fly from before them and hide itself, and then again became desirous to remain and enjoy. Above all, I was powerfully attracted by the sufferings of the Lord. I had indeed always believed that in his cross lay the salvation of the world; but I had hitherto only beheld it afar off, and hid in clouds and darkness. Now, it stood before me, as it were, in the

light of the rising sun ; but I remained at a distance, and had not the courage to approach, because I was under the delusion that in my present condition it was not meet I should, but that I must become gradually worthier and worthier to appropriate its full consolations. Oh, how simple the saving doctrine is, and yet how difficult for man actually to receive and follow !

My anxiety and distress as to the composition of my sermons remained the same. I did now indeed bend my knees in prayer both before I began to meditate and to write, but the church remained empty, and the few who came still contended with sleep, and too often unsuccessfully. The only thing that really improved was the attendance at the school. The sacristan seemed pleased with my daily visits there, and especially entreated me, by means of frequent intercourse with the parents, to bring him more and more pupils ; gradually his confidence in me increased, and when he was not well, or had other things to do, he would gladly make the school over to me.

Things, however, still looked gloomy enough at the chapel-of-ease. The sacristan and I had often a long time to wait on Sunday mornings before there came a sufficient number to constitute a congregation. If we had an early service, no women or children appeared, though the village was a considerable one. The school was wretchedly attended ; the

teacher was quite incompetent, and absorbed in secular matters, though, for the rest, an honest and respectable man. I was surprised to observe that, for some Sundays, a rustic, whom I had never seen there before, now regularly made his appearance in church, but in the most open way in the world settled himself to sleep as soon as he was seated, and snored so loud that one heard him even during the singing. A boy, to whom I had often spoken, and who had an open, merry expression of face, was in the habit of placing himself not far from the snorer, and I now requested him to sit more immediately behind him, and to touch him from time to time in order to keep him awake. At first the lad refused to do this, but the promise of a *groschen* led him to comply. During the whole service I could see the contest carried on between the little fellow and his somnolent neighbour, and by a glance of my eye I sought to encourage the former to keep up the rousing process. On the following Sunday the rustic came again, and so did the boy, whom I begged to continue his good offices as before, but he declined; and when I held out the bribe of the *groschen*, told me that the peasant had already given him two, on condition that he should not be disturbed. When the service was over, throughout the whole of which the man had slumbered unmolested, I went up to him in the churchyard, and asked him what motive he could have for coming to

church ; to which he answered, quite unconcernedly, ' There are too many flies in the house for a man to get his rest, but in the church it's fine and cool ; in winter there's never any need why I should come.' I was so amazed at this statement that I could make no reply ; and the hope of ever influencing this congregation very nearly vanished altogether. What could I do ? Even granting my sermons to be but poor ones, still, if I had been able to preach the best in the world, they would have been of no avail to people who came without any intention of listening to them.

In the parish itself, as I said before, my visiting the school, and consequent intercourse with the children, had inclined the people in my favour ; and both the pastor and the sacristan agreed that the attendance at church had increased, though it was still nothing to speak of ; but as to the chapel-of-ease, I positively despaired of ever making any way there. The next thing I did was to make a point of visiting the district school once a week ; but I very soon found that this school was so mismanaged as hardly to deserve the name. What ought to be my first step ? Was I to write a formal complaint to the authorities ? This was a course my old father had always most emphatically denounced, telling me over and over again, that its only result would be to set the whole community against me. For the same reason I kept silence when I saw the mass of the people

working in the fields on Sunday mornings, at which the old sacristan would grumble loudly, but I only grieved in my heart, and felt quite at a loss how to act. I was not to appeal, my father said, to the State ; and as to the people, I could not get at them, since they would not come to church. Out of the whole population, I could number only four men who were regular attendants. These I determined to visit at their own homes. The first of them was perfectly bewildered by my call, and I was equally embarrassed, and after a very short interview went away much disheartened. The second happened to be peculiarly busy, and I soon discovered that nothing would please him so well as my speedy departure. The third, an old man, who had been a soldier—one of those of whom it was reported that they brought in the French in 1806, and drove them away again in 1813 and 1814, and who, on account of this latter exploit, wore an iron cross on Sundays—was sitting in his little back parlour, and was evidently very curious to know what I could want with him. When I complained to him of the wretched attendance at church, he replied, that indeed church-going had completely gone out of fashion in these parts ; and when I inquired whether any were in the habit of reading the Bible or any old divinity at home, I received the same reply—all that had long gone out of fashion. So, too, with regard to grace before meat ; that was no longer fashionable hereabouts. As he was an old



man, and born in the village, I asked him whether it ever had been the fashion. Indifferent, and more than indifferent, as the man had hitherto been, he now appeared to wake up a little, and described with interest how his father and grandfather, who had occupied the same abode in the last century, used to live. I sighed over the change, but he only repeated that the fashion had changed; and I could not escape the conviction that, in this man's eyes, the Church and God's Word were mere matters of custom and habit, like everything else. However, he accidentally mentioned an aged widow who still kept up old-fashioned ways, and lived in a neat little house by itself at the end of the village, but was unable to attend church, being very lame.

My first visits, it will be owned, had not been successful; I felt more at sea than ever, and could only call upon God to help; and that he soon did. I was summoned to the bedside of the old widow, who wished to receive the sacrament, as she was near her end. This was the first time that I was called to prepare the dying for their departure, and I approached the house in anxious trepidation. My old sacristan had been praising the invalid on our way, and had added that, so far as he knew, she was the only God-fearing woman in the whole district connected with the chapel-of-ease. We found her lying in a poor but very clean room. Four daughters and a son were standing around her bed weeping. I asked



her whether she would like to speak to me alone, and whether she had anything upon her mind. She answered, 'No ; whatever I may have had upon my mind I have already settled with the Lord Jesus ; I will now eat his body, and drink his blood for the remission of sins.' To my further inquiry, whether she bore enmity to any one, she replied, 'No ; I have forgiven everything.' At these words her children began to weep more bitterly than before ; and when I sought to find out the reason, I heard that the old woman had one other son, named Christian, who was in service as a stable lad in a neighbouring village. This youth had been formerly accustomed to give his mother one of the loaves of bread allowed to him per week, but for some time back he had formed a connexion with a girl of light character, and he had ceased ever since to contribute to his mother's support ; nay, when she reproached him for this, he had even forgotten himself so far as to threaten her with his fist ! When, having heard this sad story, I solemnly inquired of her whether she entirely forgave Christian, she replied, 'How should a mother do anything but forgive ? but I know, moreover, that God will forgive him.' She uttered these words with the greatest confidence ; and when I asked how she knew this, went on to say, 'Ah, sir, one to whom so many tearful prayers cleave will never be suffered to perish !' Upon this I administered the holy supper ; and on her old, but beautiful countenance shone the

peace after which my spirit yearned. I knelt by her bedside while I said the parting prayer, and I prayed too for Christian.

As I rode back with the sacristan, I kept repeating the words, 'One to whom cleave so many tearful prayers can never perish !' I knew well that both my sisters and myself had been the subjects of many such prayers—for our dear mother was a pious woman.

Soon after this the widow died, and the funeral day arrived. The corpse lay on the middle of the floor ; the dwelling-room was crowded with people who were eating, and drinking brandy. Around the coffin stood the six children of the departed, Christian with the rest ; but he did not shed a tear, he only gazed upon his mother's face with dull and glassy eyes. The school children were all assembled round the door ; the sacristan sang, read the funeral chapter in Thessalonians, and again struck up a hymn. But the eating and the brandy drinking went on all the same. The time came for the funeral procession to start. Christian walked by my side behind the coffin, but not one word fell from his lips, nor did he join in the singing though he held the hymn-book in his hand. When we had reached the churchyard, the sacristan gave out the hymn, 'Let us bury now our dead,' the coffin was lowered into the grave, and, with a grating noise, the ropes were withdrawn. I was standing by the sacristan, when I heard a hollow sound, and a loud cry from the whole assembly. When I looked down

I saw Christian lying on the coffin, and heard him exclaim in a heart-piercing voice, ' My mother accuses me before God ! My mother accuses me before God ! ' Some young men went down and brought him up, but he could not stand, and kept reeling to and fro. After I had delivered my discourse in the church, which, being a written one, contained, of course, no allusion to this striking occurrence, I went alone with Christian into the school-house, and told him that his mother had forgiven him all, that she would never accuse him to God, and that he would assuredly yet be saved, because he had been the subject of so many tearful prayers. This incident struck home to several hearts, and the following Sunday there were more men than usual in church, especially young men, whom I had never seen there before. For the first time I ventured to depart a little from what I had written down and learned by heart,—in admonishing the young to honour their mothers, that they might never know what it was to stand beside their coffins and say, ' My mother is my accuser before God ! ' and I could see that the usually hopelessly impassive countenances did seem moved.

Gradually I accustomed myself to seeing the church empty on Sundays, but indeed there was already some slight improvement in that respect. The people began to talk a good deal about me, and if I met them in the fields or the village, would not only answer me, but stand still for a chat. Yet, after all, what did their

coming to church matter if their lives remained the same? Not one fruit of my preaching had I as yet seen ; my proud expectations of turning men in shoals from their evil ways had been quite relinquished, at all events by my reason. And yet Isaiah, speaking in the name of the Lord, does expressly declare, 'My word shall not return unto me void ;' and St. Paul teaches that the gospel is 'the power of God unto salvation.' No sooner had I somewhat given over fretting about the attendance at church, than I began to experience great distress of mind at the inefficacy of my preaching. Every other man can see the work of his hands, not so the pastor, at all events not so I ; and even my dear old sacristan seldom spoke a word of encouragement to me. When I stood at my window and saw others at work, I often reflected with a heavy heart upon the calling I had chosen, and envied all who did at least accomplish something tangible in return for their daily bread, while I seemed to do nothing at all. Sometimes, indeed, as I mentioned before, I sought to soothe myself by remembering that God's spiritual kingdom is within, and that the influence of his word is generally unseen ; but, on the other hand, I knew that in the olden times there had been men whose setting forth of the Word had had mighty results, and that even in these days there were some whose preaching had led many to repentance and amendment of life. During my solitary strolls by the brook or on the side of the

lake, I often stood still in desperation, and found no reply for the questions that perplexed my mind. I would willingly have laid all the blame upon the congregation, upon their sleepiness and inattention ; but I could not disguise from myself that there were men who knew how to keep others awake and arrest them, and therefore I could not entirely exonerate myself, and this led to my again agitating the question as to my own spiritual state. One thing grew clear to me, that a sermon must not only contain abstract truth, but that it must be a sincere utterance of the individual preacher. Orthodoxy can be learnt from others ; living faith must be a matter of personal experience. The Lord sent out his disciples, saying, ‘Ye shall testify of me, because ye have been with me from the beginning.’ He only is a witness who speaks of what he has seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, and handled with his own hands. Orthodoxy is merely another form of rationalism, if it be learnt from without. To which we may add, that the system of Lutheran theology is logical in the highest degree, and consequently affords, by the very precision of its formulæ, a certain gratification to the natural understanding. Doubtless, with regard to the Church itself, and its government, orthodoxy is far preferable to rationalism, but as to its influence upon preaching it differs little. It may only serve to quiet the conscience of the pastor with a false peace, and to set the congregation to sleep. I saw plainly enough how one

became orthodox, but could not discover how to be a witness. Those words of the Lord, 'Because ye have been with me from the beginning,' I would willingly have applied to myself; but I was forced to confess that though I might indeed have beheld him from time to time afar off, I had not yet been 'with him.' A feeling of poverty and helplessness came over me, and I took delight in reflecting upon the text, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' but with my conceptions of blessedness I was far from rightly understanding the beautiful words.

It is indeed a most remarkable circumstance that there should be so few who are seriously anxious about their own salvation; and the lament of the Psalmist as to the careless security of the human race is certainly well founded. At all events, one seldom hears any such anxiety expressed by pastors and theological candidates; and yet it is especially hard for a minister to be saved, for he belongs to those from whom much will be required. If the words of the Lord, 'Narrow is the gate, and strait the way,' are to be literally understood, how incomprehensible it is that so few men should have any anxiety as to their personal chances of salvation. Many and many pastors live as though their being amongst the saved were a thing of course.

On one occasion, when I was upon a visit to my aged father, the old Bible, with its small print and

yellow leaves, lying as usual upon his table, I chanced to take it up, and my eye fell upon the many marked passages. One verse especially was so underlined with red, blue, and black ink, that it was only legible to those who already knew it. This old Bible had come down from my great-grandfather to us, so this particular text must have been a favourite with the family for generations. It was the passage in Philipians, ‘He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ.’ I should have liked to have asked my father why he as well as his ancestors had so scored this verse ; but I did not do so, because he was never in the habit of discussing his inner life with his children. On my journey back these words of St. Paul’s were constantly in my mind. What, then, was this good work ? And what was its beginning ? And if it is the Lord who must begin it, how can it be my fault if it be not begun in me ? After much pondering I resolved to preach upon this passage on the following Sunday, in spite of my so imperfectly understanding it. Indeed, as to that, what passage could I have found that I so understood as to be able to *bear witness* of it ? After the lapse of many years this youthful discourse is fresh in my memory. While I was delivering it, I forgot the empty church and the sleepy congregation—I was with my God alone. When I look over this sermon now, I find it indeed obscure and confused, but full of the yearning, and groaning, and travailing of the



creature after the glorious liberty of the children of God. That afternoon, when playing draughts, as I often did with the old pastor, he warned me against mysticism and fanaticism ; but in the evening I met the sacristan, who was more cordial and confidential than usual, and even told me that my sermon had pleased him. Indeed, weak as it was, and inadequate as a statement of the way of salvation, it was nevertheless true and complete as a transcript of my spiritual state and spiritual need. By this time I had taken one onward step—I knew that the good work begins when a man is seriously alarmed lest he should be lost, and when he from his heart desires to be saved. And accordingly I could thank the good Shepherd for having begun this good work in me.

If we distinguish among poets between those who *make verses*, and those in whom *verses are born* ; we may, with equal justice, distinguish between those sermons written according to rule, and with infinite trouble, and those that gush forth from the preacher's own inner life. It is, however, a very hazardous thing to wait the whole week through, and expect day after day that the happy hour will at length arrive in the which it will be given us to compose our sermon. He who will receive grace must use the means of grace. All preaching springs from the Word of God, and is in one sense a gift, and nothing more is necessary than to live upon the gospel ; but it will never do to keep thinking the while of the



rules of composition and the faults of the flock. No ; it is above all essential that the preacher should place himself under the power of the text, and with prayer and self-examination seek to discover how it applies *to himself*,—what reproof and consolation, what warning and nourishment it contains for his own soul. He will soon find that the experience of his own heart will win its way to the hearts of others. As painted victuals cannot satisfy the appetite, so putting imaginary cases and speaking from without is powerless and lifeless, and the sermon goes in at one ear and out at the other.

Before long another conviction forced itself upon me. If my preaching were somewhat less trite and lifeless, somewhat more genuine than of yore, still it lacked the elements of popularity ; its style was not appropriate to the hearers. My own poor life was too simple and too different from that of the congregation at large, and I sadly felt the need of knowing them more intimately. It is not enough to hold up God's word in its entirety to a spiritually lifeless congregation, one must have skill to adapt it to all the relations of their daily life. There are admirable sermons which make no impression at all upon the hearers ! If, at the first outset, the preacher place himself on the top of the tree or the hill, the congregation being seated far below him, they do indeed hear what the man, perched on the height, says, but they do not see what he describes, and they

have some difficulty in believing that he actually sees it himself in the exact colours in which he represents it to them. But if he gradually rises, taking their level as a starting point, and gradually enlarges his horizon, perhaps he may lead some one or other to take an onward step with him, or at least more readily to believe that he does see farther than they. Or to speak without any metaphor: the preacher must first meet the people on their own ground, and then, in all love and humility, proffer his hand to them, and constrain them by the tenderness of his entreaties to let themselves be led a little above the domain of mere earthly life. But it may be asked, how is this possible in a community of young and old, rich and poor, healthy and sick, all differing from one another in character and circumstances? St. Paul shall give the reply: 'For there is no difference, for all have sinned.' He who knows *one* man thoroughly, knows a whole class. All peasants have much the same range of ideas; and so with women, youths, young girls, servants—the way of thinking will be found the same, wherever there is a similarity of culture and condition. And further, we may safely assume that all the unconverted are without peace, consolation, or hope, and have their hearts full of yearning after a happier state. And we may also assume that, in any community where ordinances are very ill attended, those who go to church at all are peculiarly conscious of some need which they are thus vaguely seeking to

supply. Now, if we are once able to make some individual of this class clearly discern what it is he wants, if he once discovers that the preacher knows more about him than he knows about himself, he will willingly let himself be led on, impelled by his sense of need, and allured by the promises; and so he follows the minister till the thread breaks. What an admirable example our Lord, by his teaching in parables, sets to preachers; and how evident it is that attention is invariably awaked whenever the preacher knows how to interweave into his sermon the incidents of daily life.

The positive relation of the individual soul to God is indeed a mystery; but it is certain that the Divine grace manifests itself in the manner of life, and that God would have us awake to a sense of sin, and a need of salvation by Christ. However, it is a great mistake in dealing with a lifeless congregation to begin by the preaching of the law, and by blaming people for their irreligion, and threatening them with damnation unless they repent. One may, indeed, reprove and chasten those really awakened, but the unconverted must be won by love, and by the announcement of grace and mercy. The apostle tells us that we are to pray and beseech in Christ's stead. A pastor full of threats and wrath will never do any good, more especially if he is young in years or spiritual life. But, above all, let no minister betray his sensitiveness or wounded vanity as to a scanty

attendance at church, or show himself angry with the defaulters. The few who do hear his complaint are amused, and by no means edified ; and when this strain reaches the ears of the others, they only laugh. If the pastor really mourns over the lifeless state of the congregation, and is really humble, he will be far more inclined to lay the blame of this non-attendance upon himself than upon others. Humility is ever the fairest fruit of faith, and finds favour even with the children of this world, and a pastor should earnestly follow after the best gifts. True, this may be carried too far ; there are people constitutionally so retiring, that they would never enter any door, however invitingly open it might stand ; but still there is nothing that so repels a flock, as to observe that he who calls himself a servant of Christ has never taken one lesson of humility in his Master's school. If a man be proud and arbitrary, rapid and severe in his judgment of others, if, in the consciousness of his own worth, he looks from the pulpit down upon the people, and speaks to them without betraying the least touch of a broken and contrite heart of his own, what wonder if they keep away ?

Again, it may be well to remark, that we are never quite right in assuming that men feel happy in the service of sin, or under the dominion of the flesh, or that they experience unqualified pleasure in any course of evil doing. They all have hours in which they are ashamed of their bondage, and would willingly be

free ; and he who comes to meet them with heart-felt sympathy will assuredly be patiently listened to. And also it is paying unbelief too great a compliment to treat it as a reality. People are not so unbelieving as they give themselves out ; they are, at all events, by no means certain of their position, and are often conscious that they are deceiving themselves. A man is not speaking the truth when he tells you that he believes in no God, no immortality of the soul, no judgment to come. The fear of perdition is a very frequent source of unbelief. We must not, therefore, presuppose genuine unbelief ; we must rather seek to expose the falsity of the pretence to it. And, in the same way, we may safely proceed upon the assumption that the servants of sin have occasionally a secret longing for dominion over the flesh. He who denies to them such longing does them injustice, and they harden their hearts against him ; but they will not avoid one who has a sincere sympathy for them, both in their temptations and their better impulses. If we have only dwelt long upon God's patience and forbearance towards ourselves, we shall leave off all impatient anger with others.

At first I thought that I must wait till winter time to become really acquainted with the people, though how I was then to set about it, was by no means clear to me. What was I to talk to them about ? Where should I find common ground ? But, meanwhile, the task had already been unconsciously begun. In the district

connected with the chapel-of-ease, my attempt at visiting from house to house had seemed a failure, though it might have taught me many lessons. In the parish itself, I had already been in most of the houses, on matters connected with the children, either to visit such of them as were sick, or to press others to come to school. The sacristan often remarked that the school had not been so well attended for years. I may here observe, that most young beginners in the pastoral office take up very mistaken ideas about visiting their people, and holding communication with them; going about as if with their gown on, and speaking as though they were in the pulpit. It may indeed be that there are still communities where this is practicable, but generally it is not judicious, more especially where it has become obsolete. Visiting one's flock may have a double result, may do good to them, and to one's-self also. For my own part, I found that to speak to them of God's word, or their own spiritual state, was at that time entirely beyond my power. The next best thing that occurred to me was to try to find out their mode of life, what they did, talked about, and, above all, thought of. I wanted to gain an acquaintance with their cares and griefs, their pleasures and their wishes. Many a pastor believes that he already knows all this, but he is probably more conversant with a picture drawn by his own imagination than with reality. Listening to the spontaneous utterance of the people is



very different from trying to represent to one's-self their mental condition. A day-labourer, a farm-servant, is doubtless a human being, but he does not live very differently to a mere animal—he eats, sleeps, labours, and rests as animals do ; another world than this is shut out from his ken ; he has so little conception of another life, that even the burial of his neighbour or his child hardly suggests it to his mind. Gluttony, vanity, impurity, envy, and selfishness have so taken possession of him, that he has scarcely any idea of spiritual liberty. Now there are many pastors who are skilled in demonstrating the *necessity* of redemption, yet find that they make no impression upon a class like this. The essential is to awake in them the wish for redemption. The best chance of effecting this is afforded by those seasons when the sorrows of life, the suffering of sickness, domestic discord, or the disgrace that follows sin, have made the heart more than usually susceptible. When the Lord addresses his invitation to men, it is to the weary and heavy laden that he turns ; and doubtless these epithets do not apply merely to those who feel the burden of their sins, but to those also who are laden with the weight of grief of any kind. In our parish-visiting, we must give the preference to those families where affliction, in whatsoever form, has entered, and, indeed, it is never absent from those houses where sin dwells without any counteracting faith. No doubt some people will try to conceal their troubles as

they do their sins, more especially if these troubles are evident consequences of sin. But I repeat it, an experienced minister may safely address all unconverted souls as weary, and if he does this with the same tender heart with which Christ of old looked upon Jerusalem—because unmindful in the day of her visitation of those things which belonged to her peace—he will often be readily understood, will often meet with a willing ear where he had not ventured to look for it. Generally speaking, there is in every district a certain number whose sins are open and manifest, and who are ready to listen to any one who speaks to them without reproaches and without contempt.

Besides these universal conditions, there are plenty of more special interests which will afford the minister the common ground he seeks. For instance, the old soldier with the iron cross, whom I mentioned before, was fond of talking of the war of liberation, of the battles and struggles of those momentous days, which made our fatherland so great, and the memory of which never stirred our hearts more than at the present time. Whenever, in the introduction to one of my sermons, I alluded to those stirring events, those engagements, those hard conflicts, his sympathy was aroused, and he would accompany me a little further into a consideration of that other warfare and those other triumphs of the flesh and of the Spirit, which are contrary one to the other. Again, upon another occasion, I chanced to see a young man who



was following the plough in a field alone, shedding tears. I did not like to notice it at the time lest he should feel embarrassed ; but I soon contrived to find out that he had recently left his home and his beloved parents, and that the farmer in whose service he was treated him roughly ; it was a case evidently of homesickness. Now this was a complaint I too well knew ; I spoke a few friendly words to him, and when, on the following Sunday, I dwelt upon the sufferings of the home-sick, and then passed on to the spiritual longing for the heavenly Father's house, I could see plainly that the young man understood me. Indeed, I generally found that those whom I had visited in the course of the week, or with whom I had had some conversation, were pretty sure to come to church on the Sunday ; and, accordingly, I contrived that my sermon should have some particular reference to their case, and should be calculated to strike where I had found them vulnerable. This established confidential relations between us. The individual believed that I spoke for him alone, and that he alone fully understood me ; and yet he was only one of many who found themselves in the same condition. For, I repeat it, he who hits the case of one hits the case of a class ; and besides, whatever has the impress of truth and reality, will interest even those who are not directly concerned therein.

Experiences such as these gave before long an entirely new character to my preaching ; I began in-

variably with everyday incidents of actual occurrence, and then by analogy sought to lead my hearers on to the spiritual truths of the kingdom of God. I remember one sermon in particular, suggested to me by the fact of a child having, through fear of well-deserved punishment, run off into the wood, and when evening came being missed by the parents, who instantly instituted an anxious search, and at length found the little truant asleep in the brushwood. I first painted the fear and apprehension of the child, and its consequent flight ; then the love of the parents who sought their child ; and at last, the joy and happiness of child and parents when the wanderer was found ; and I pointed out how the Lord was come to seek and save lost children and lost parents both. Then, again, a fire that broke out and burnt down a mill afforded a rich vein of illustration ; and so did the various occupations of agricultural life—sowing, reaping, ploughing, harrowing, droughts, floods—whatever excited customary hopes and fears, was sure to rouse attention. Deaths and domestic events in general were often alluded to with much advantage. In the parish church the attendance was now decidedly much better, and there was hardly any more sleeping to be seen there. Things went on more slowly in the chapel-of-ease, but there was some progress even there. I began to take much more delight in my intercourse with the people, and their manner visibly increased in friendliness. No doubt our con-

versations ran far more upon secular than upon heavenly topics ; we talked far more about our fields and our favourite cattle, than about prayer and the word of God, but I know that I found the preparation of my discourses far less irksome than heretofore ; and when I looked about me in church, I encountered no longer the same impassive, lifeless, apathetic countenances ; and further, my old sacristan often told me that the people liked talking over my sermons in their own homes. Yet still I had to return to the one great question. What signifies preaching and all other means of grace whatsoever—what is the use of people coming to church if they are not converted ? And hitherto there had not been a sign of this, nor did I know with certainty of one single person who sought after the salvation of his soul with fear and trembling.

There was at that time an old and singular man living in the village, the son of whose old age I had become acquainted with in school, where he distinguished himself among the other children by his earnestness, and his devotion during prayer. All manner of anecdotes were circulated about this boy's father. One day, it seemed, he had heard his neighbours—a farmer and his wife—quarrelling very loudly and fiercely, and from words proceeding to blows. Upon this he took a ladder, set it against the high paling that surrounded the farm-yard, mounted it, and cried with a loud voice, ' Fire, fire ! ' The farmer and his wife rushed to the door, and inquired, ' Where is the

fire ?' The old man replied, ' In hell, for all who are at enmity and strife.' After this incident, the expression, ' There's fire in the house,' became proverbially applied amongst the villagers to the case of a quarrelsome pair. I had been told that this old man detested ministers, called them foxes and swine ravaging the vineyard, and never by any chance came to church. He was a thatcher by trade, and was seldom to be met with at home. On Sunday afternoon I called upon him, and found him singing a hymn with his boy, with a large book lying open before him—the sermons of Spangenberg. He was very dry to me, and spoke all the time of false and true doctrine. It was false doctrine that was preached now-a-days in the church ; true doctrine was only to be found in the old divines. And although he did put a certain restraint upon himself, yet there was much evident bitterness in the tone with which he spoke of the behaviour of ministers in general, and the lamentable condition of their congregations. He knew, he said, that wheat and tares were intended to grow together, but now the wheat had almost all vanished, and nothing but tares remained ; in short, it was no longer possible to look upon modern congregations as the visible church ; self-righteousness and ungodliness had entirely overgrown them. The fault lay, he averred, with the pastors, who widened their borders, and enjoyed their income, but did not trouble themselves about souls ; who clothed themselves, indeed, with the wool of the flock, and ate their

flesh, but never led them to feed on the pastures of God's word, gave them only the dry husks of human reason. And thus it was that my first acquaintance with a *Seceder* began. I had little idea at the time how much I was to have to do with them in the future, nor what trouble and sorrow they would occasion me. I left this old man with a feeling of sincere regard, and a determination to preach nothing but sound doctrine, and, at all events, to give no offence to the flock by my conduct. When the old pastor heard that I had not only conversed with, but actually paid a visit to, this old controversialist, he warned me against him as one who presumed to judge and condemn him and the whole parish, and denounced him as a schismatic. But I was aware that, in the language of Scripture, the sin of schism is attributed to those only who depart from God's word and sacraments, and I did not believe this old man to be really guilty of it. The following Sunday I saw him in church, where his appearance evidently excited a good deal of attention ; and the old sacristan informed me that he had pronounced me a preacher of sound doctrine, though as yet in much weakness. In the course of my conversations with the people during the ensuing week, I found out that this modified approval of the old thatcher, insignificant personage as he seemed, had considerably raised me in the general estimation. It was well known that he was an enemy to ministers in general, averring that they

preached unsoundly, and consequently great stress was laid upon the exception he made in my favour ; nor do I attempt to deny that I too was mightily pleased at it. Pastors make a mistake when they imagine that the good word of the worldly and irreligious adds to their respectability. Whatever men may say about liking a minister who lives and lets live, and will in his sermons widen the narrow way a little, they do not really approve it ; and experience shows plainly enough that natural gifts, be they ever so brilliant, will not long satisfy a congregation or fill a church. When God touches a man's heart, and makes him yearn for comfort, he will invariably turn to a pastor who bears the character of being pious and orthodox ; it is only the Cross of Christ that has any attractive influence upon even the careless soul. Even those who dispense their church patronage to boon companions, who can play a hand at cards well, inwardly despise them, and very seldom go to their churches. A pastor who gives offence to the pious members of the congregation, ay, to the very humblest of them, will not obtain the respect of even the worldly.

To resume my narrative. The church then went on gradually filling, but still I could discover no trace of any good result, and I could only refer this filling of the church to my daily visits to the school, and to the increasing affection displayed by the children ; for he who has the hearts of the children



is sure to win those of the parents. The attention paid to my sermons became much more marked, and there was hardly a sleeper to be seen ; but of what avail is hearing if conduct remains unaltered. The old sacristan and the eccentric thatcher spoke much of the power of prayer. Now, my sore anxiety and distress about the composition of my sermons, and also about my own spiritual state, had driven me to prayer for myself, but as yet I had never prayed specially for the congregation. I now determined daily to put up intercessory prayer for both my cures, but I own that my faith and courage soon failed. It was not, indeed, that I had any doubts of the power of God's word, or that with God all things were possible, but yet, when I looked at the daily domestic life of the parishioners, and saw how insensible they seemed to a higher world, or to the care of their souls, I seemed to have no spirit to ask for the performance of such a miracle as their conversion. However, it occurred to me to pray that it might be granted to me to find out and touch the heart of some one individual. And yet when I thought who that one should be—turned over the case now of this man, now of that, my courage died away. At length I determined to choose my next door neighbour, whom, out of my window, I daily saw in his farmyard, and who, in point of fact, was neither better nor worse than other farmers. I continued to intercede for him for some weeks, and was soon conscious of a feeling of increased interest

and affection for him. But when I heard him, as indeed I often did, swear at or quarrel with his wife, or play cards on Sundays till quite late into the night, or go into the public-house, I own I found it rather difficult to persevere in my prayers. However, one day that I was preaching about the unhappiness of those who live without God in the world, and more especially about the discomforts of an irreligious married pair ; how they daily vex and irritate each other ; how Satan delights to make them instruments of mutual torment ; and what lamentable consequences ensue to the poor children ; I could see the water come into my neighbour's eyes, and unconventional and unusual as it might seem for a rich farmer to shed tears in church, he could not keep them back. At this my hope revived, and I thanked God. However, that very afternoon, after my return from the chapel-of-ease, I heard a great uproar as I sat in my quiet chamber, and, moving to my window, I saw my neighbour beating his shepherd lads, and swearing most fearfully. His wife came running up, and tried to screen the youths ; but she set about it in so ill-judged a manner that the tumult only grew worse. I was dreadfully discouraged at this, and it even occurred to me to give up my intercessory prayer for this unpromising subject. In the evening I went out walking in the fields, and met my neighbour ; who, though he held out his hand with the utmost friendliness, yet felt, I observed, embarrassed in my pre-



sence. He spoke of many different subjects, and seemed resolved to keep the conversation in his own hands ; but indeed my own natural timidity and my youth were sufficient to prevent my touching upon the subject uppermost in the minds of both. However, that evening I renewed my intercession. Some time after I heard it remarked that he had left off going to the public-house and playing at cards, and I could see that he took a real pleasure in doing me any little service. Once, when the horse that I was accustomed to ride was working in the fields, and I was summoned in great haste to a sick person in the outlying district, and about to walk off thither through the rain, my neighbour chanced to hear it, and immediately he came to the hedge that divided the parsonage from his farm, and called out, ‘I’ll have my horse put in and drive you over.’ Now, as it was sowing-time, and he was a keen farmer, this kind act really implied no little sacrifice, and, further, he drove me himself, that I might not have to give anything to the servant, for he knew well how small my income was, only, indeed, amounting to ten *Thalers* a month, given me by the old pastor. A minister is very wrong to be indifferent to any proof of good will or affection that he may receive—he ought rather to be deeply grateful for it ; for in many cases love for the minister is a sort of stepping-stone to love of the Lord—only let the minister see that he keep himself humble.

Time went on. Harvest came, the days had grown short, when late one evening I heard a knock at my door. It was my neighbour, who came to pay me a visit for the first time. Plainly he had some special reason for this step, but, after the manner of country people, he did not allude to it at once; he went on talking of his horses and cows, his farm, and his children, and after an hour so spent prepared to go away, just saying, when he reached the door, that he wished to attend the Sacrament on the next day but one, and adding in a broken voice, 'Pray for me and for my wife.' Upon this I drew him back, and informed him how long I had been in the habit of praying for them. He sighed deeply, and said, 'I would gladly be saved, but I have been a great sinner in the course of my life.' At this my joy was so great, I had to pause and reflect what reply I might safely make. He consented to kneel down with me. That evening I was so happy and so thankful to God, the hearer of prayer, that when I went to bed it was long before I could fall asleep.

At the end of the year, when Christmas and New Year, and the Sundays of that holy season, with their several sermons rose before my mind, and threatened me with their claims, I had another period of great anxiety to pass through. The old pastor had told me that I need not preach on the fourth Sunday in Advent, as he himself meant to undertake the Holy Communion, and expected further assistance from a

friend. But when that friend arrived late on Saturday evening, I was summoned, and informed that he had only prepared himself to take a part in the prayers, and had taken for granted that I should preach as usual. In short, he positively announced that he had not brought any sermon, and was unable to preach without a manuscript before him.

The old pastor, for his part, declared himself unwell; and as for me, I held it impossible to compose and learn a sermon by heart in so short a space of time. Accordingly, the old sacristan was sent for, and told that he would have to read one; but he, having received these instructions, came up to my room, and requested me to make an effort to preach. 'What will the congregation say,' asked he, 'when they see three ordained clergymen sit there in their canonicals while I read? It will never do.' He laboured hard to give me courage, and pointed me out the epistle for the day: 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Be careful for nothing, but by prayer and supplication, . . . and the peace of God shall help your hearts,' etc. It seemed to him that surely it would be easy enough to preach on that passage without much preparation. I felt ashamed of myself in his presence, and though I did not know what would come of it, I gave in at length, and promised to preach. All that evening, and all night through, I tried to subdue my constitutional timidity by prayer. As to my usual plan of pre-

paring a sermon—writing it down and learning it off—that was not to be thought of. When the bell rang early the following morning, all my terror came back upon me, but I constrained myself to pray. I went up into the pulpit, and just opposite me, in the choir, I saw the old sacristan standing with clasped hands, and at once all fear and embarrassment seemed to drop away from me. It was the first time that I had ever preached extempore, and the Lord was very merciful to me. I was a good deal overcome at the end of my sermon, when speaking of the peace that passeth understanding, and the congregation shared my emotion. At the close of the service, my neighbour and the old sacristan came up to me and shook me by the hand. But it was all over with me in the estimation of the strange pastor, who spoke much during dinner and in the course of the afternoon of the lamentable errors of mysticism and of a mediæval theology. It was not till years after this circumstance that I could venture habitually to preach extempore ; for I only attributed my success on this occasion to the Lord having helped me, because I had not neglected due preparation out of indolence or presumption. But things are changed now-a-days, and youthful pastors now take to preaching after merely what they call careful meditation. It may indeed be that they have not to contend with such difficulties as I had. I know that I had great trouble with the dialect, and was far from clear as to points of doc-

trine ; but, nevertheless, I do consider it very wrong for men in general to presume upon a gift of extempore speaking, which is the portion of very few. That some succeed, is no precedent for all. The consequences of this foolish self-confidence—so I must call it—or this idle habit, are too palpable. It is easy enough to string words together ; but there is often a lack of thought, and then the discourse is mere copious, unconnected twaddle, to which the unfortunate pastor knows not how to put an end, however anxiously the congregation awaits one. The range of ideas becomes narrower and narrower, the repetitions more intolerable. Then, again, the delivery grows at length affected and artificial. The voice is called upon to supply the deficiencies of the intellect. The preacher feels that he must say something striking, something out of the common, and adapts his tones accordingly ; but the striking passages will not come ! Some fall into a solemn would-be pathos ; others work themselves up into a state of offensive excitement. In short, it is scarcely possible to warn young preachers too earnestly to beware of extemporizing. Presumption is never allowed to go unpunished ; only the humble have the promise of help. In the first years of my ministry, I never composed a sermon but in the sweat of my brow, and with great fear and anxiety ; and it was only much later on in life, when, having to preach three and generally four times on the Sunday, I found it intolerable to re-

peat my one discourse, and impossible to write out and learn so many, that I began to take the matter more easily.

But enough on the subject of preaching. My first year taught me that pure doctrine, and the unadulterated Word of God, were indeed the main points ; but that prayer for one's own soul and the souls of the congregation, and not only so, but intercessory prayer for individuals in that congregation, were also essential ; and, lastly, that one must beware of preaching over the heads of one's hearers. And it is equally necessary carefully to discover how to get access to the people, and what means may most effectually be used to lead them out of their earthly cares, out of the range of things seen and temporal, to solicitude respecting the salvation of their souls, and the great realities of the unseen world.

All beginnings are difficult. This I had had experience of with regard to preaching ; and so it was again in preparing the young members of my flock for confirmation. This preparation begins with us in the middle of November and lasts till Palm-Sunday. There was no room for these confirmation classes to meet in the parsonage ; and in order to interfere as little as possible with the regular business of the school, we had to assemble them in the school-room on Wednesdays and Saturdays from eleven to one. These young people call themselves

‘prayer children;’ and their parents say, ‘I want my son or my daughter taught to pray.’ At the close of this course of instruction, the candidates are admitted to the sacrament; and one often hears old or sick people express a wish to live till they can see this or that child a partaker at the Lord’s table. There was an outward difference between these particular scholars and the others; the children, or at all events the girls, coming to the confirmation-class better dressed. From the outlying district boys and girls came in separate bands—the boys were rather the earlier. There was a certain earnestness and feeling of responsibility evident in the bearing of all these young people; but there was a great difference between those who belonged to the parish church and to the chapel-of-ease: the latter were much less well-grounded both in the Catechism and Bible history. Some of the mistakes which they habitually made showed an utter want of reflection, and in general they struck one as hopelessly dull and impassive. In their whole district there was no one, not even the master, who could speak High German. Some few youths, indeed, who had served in the army, or been to the town, might have been able to do so, only it would have been very unpopular, and they would have been ridiculed for their conceit in speaking differently to the rest. With regard to girls especially this held good; and she who wore a longer dress, or spoke a purer dialect than her neighbour,



was looked upon as a doubtful character. For my own part, I had been very familiar with Low German from my early days, and invariably employed it in speaking to the people in their own homes or out in the fields ; but our children had been accustomed to learn their hymns and Bible-lessons in High German. Those, however, connected with the chapel-of-ease evidently attached no meaning to the words, and repeated all alike in one frightful sing-song. In our village the old sacristan, in school time, spoke Low German to the little children ; to the elders he sometimes used High ; but at all events, when he was angry, he always scolded in *Low*. My old friend, the thatcher, on the other hand, always prayed in High German. I took the sacristan's advice on the subject, and he gave it in favour of adhering to High German, since his children, he said, did understand it ; and as for the others, they were such a stupid set, it did not matter how you spoke to them. When the classes assembled, I was struck with the order they adopted. The sons of the bailiff and of the church-wardens took the highest places ; next came the farmers' boys ; then the shopkeepers' ; last of all, the thatcher's son ; the girls being arranged on the same plan. The sacristan strongly advised me to let the children go on placing themselves thus, both because there would otherwise be a greater amount of noise, and also because it was always a ticklish thing to meddle with existing customs,—the social difference between



farmers, tradesmen, and day-labourers being invariably marked, on the one side by consequence, assumed on the other by respect paid. This was made particularly evident on all festive occasions, and even in the places taken at church. The man-servant and maid-servant certainly call their master and mistress father and mother, and the whole household dined at one table ; but for all that, each had a strong feeling of his own particular position, and it very seldom happened that they married out of it. A farmer's wife would say, ' My daughter is too young to think of marrying beneath her,' even when she had reached the age of thirty.

I found the first lessons I gave these classes sad, uphill work. I could not get at the children's minds. Certainly they learned their appointed lessons with much zeal and industry, but I was afraid they did not understand them. However, I soon discovered those who had the best capacities, and were the most willing to be spoken to, and began to call them to me, and to accustom them to answer my questions, which related at first to every-day matters, and then gradually took a religious character. But I could not get the majority beyond the mere saying their lessons by rote. This was trying enough, and yet how could I reasonably expect anything better? In their homes there was no family prayer ; the Bible was not read ; the old sermon books lay hidden in a corner—gone wholly *out of fashion*. From their tender infancy

these young creatures had heard of nothing but the business or daily cares of their parents. The school was a thing quite apart from their domestic life, and had but little influence, the instruction being given quite mechanically, and occupying itself more with storing the memory than awakening the intellect. I was obliged to lower my plans and prospects considerably ; and it was long before the stolid faces and fixed looks became at all more animated. Indeed, it was no easy task for the children to find their way in such an entirely new sphere of thought. I began by talking over the beautiful, simple precepts they had already learned at school ; as, for example, ‘ Fear God, dear children. God sees and knows all things. Amen.’ This precept gradually led us on to the ten commandments, and even to the first article of faith. Then came the next : ‘ Christ’s blood and righteousness,’ etc., which bore upon the second article ; and so we went on. At the present time schools are very different to what they were then ; at all events, children are much more ready in speech, though perhaps not so well grounded in the Catechism. I soon convinced myself that it was mere waste of time to plague the poor little things, with definitions and theories, and confined myself to making them give some illustration of their own of the different clauses of the Catechism. We got on best with the commandments, worst with the third article, and with those bearing on the sacraments, perhaps because I did not feel myself quite

at home on the latter subject. There is this peculiarity about the gospel doctrines, they are not to be learned, or taught from books; they can only be understood and made intelligible by personal experience. Such of them as had become true and clear to myself individually, I was able to treat of so as to secure the attention and sympathy of the children. My chief aim was to point out how this or that commandment might be kept or disobeyed within the narrow sphere of a child's daily life, and what influence this or that doctrine ought to exercise on the conduct of a child, as say, for example, the omnipresence and the omniscience of God, and the relation into which baptism had brought them with their Heavenly Father. I dwelt very long on the fifth commandment; and as I was already pretty familiar with the family-life of the village, I was able to rebuke certain naughty habits of some of the children, but yet so indirectly that it did not at once appear who was alluded to; and if this one blushed, and that one showed himself embarrassed, I was careful to look away. My delight was great indeed, when, after my exposition of the third commandment, almost all the children began to attend church without any positive urging on my part, and when I heard from their parents that they were getting more tractable and obedient. The more I learnt to love them, the easier I found the lessons that I gave; and I soon saw that praise and appreciation, whenever there

was an opportunity of bestowing these, were far more efficient than censure and punishment. The thatcher's son was from the first, and continued to be, the best scholar of the class, for he was a child of many prayers.

When I revert, as I am doing now, to the early days of my ministry, I am conscious of a profound sympathy for every candidate who is called upon to undertake an office, the duties of which he is so practically ignorant of. No doubt he has heard a good deal about practical theology, but probably only from the lips of a professor who has had no personal experience of it himself, and teaches it much as an author who had never been beyond the confines of his own province might describe a journey round the world. Most young theological students are called to be pastors in the country. Now, the professor may indeed know how a village looks outside, but as to the way in which its inhabitants live, think, and feel, he is often entirely in the dark. I can remember how the farmers around used to laugh at a learned agriculturist who farmed 'from the book,' how they prophesied his failure, and called his system 'a Latin system.' And no doubt it is a great mistake to treat all farms alike, whether large or small, deteriorated or improving, having a light or a heavy soil, poor or rich pastures, and so forth. It is essential that the farmer should study the special nature of his land, not taking it for granted that any one system is good for all

lands. Many a scientific and theoretical farmer has farmed to his own destruction. And so with regard to the field of theology, what a difference it makes whether the young candidate be called to a parish spiritually alive or spiritually dead, attentive to or regardless of ordinances, agricultural or manufacturing, poor or rich, having a religious or irreligious patron, bailiff, and inspector, etc.

It occurs to me, as I write, how in later years a young clerical neighbour of mine came running to me in haste because he had been applied to for a certificate of baptism and did not know how to draw it up. In medicine and jurisprudence, indeed, a course of practical training under experienced men is absolutely necessary, but the young minister is unmercifully thrown into the water to sink or swim unaided. The evangelical Church troubles itself little about its candidates, and sends them into active service too often ignorant of what that service requires. When once they have passed their theological examinations well, they have done with all further study. Then come thoughts about marriage, furnishing their house, managing their land, and so forth. And thus it is that so many sink deep in earthly cares, in debt, in embarrassment, and their first love dies down all too soon, and their spirits' wings are clipped, and, in spite of their early aspirations, they come to think about their own income more than the souls of their flock. Young pastors have numerous dangers to encounter, and many

succumb early ; and moral and orthodox though they may be, their congregations remain fast asleep and wholly unmoved by their preaching. But, it may be asked, how is this to be remedied ? Theological seminaries and kindred institutions may indeed do something, but not much. Many candidates become for a time domestic or school tutors, and during this part of their career the light within them is often quenched before they get an appointment. I can only think of one plan that might perhaps be successfully carried out, and this is it : that theological candidates should be placed for a whole year with some confessedly wise, faithful, and zealous country clergyman, whose own labours had evidently been blessed, and whom they might attend and aid in almost all his official duties, especially in the preparation of the young for confirmation. They might also preach occasionally, with the advantage of having their sermons criticised by an experienced pastor, and they might acquire a thorough knowledge of all parish business by keeping this minister's accounts, and preparing his reports and tables under his direction or supervision. The selection of the clergymen best fitted to receive candidates would remain with the consistory, and I would suggest that unequal, too unequal as are the revenues of different pastors, this evil might be partially remedied by assigning to some of the richer cures the maintenance, throughout a year, of one of the poor candidates. In my opinion the youthful pastor might thus be saved

from much misery and many a false step. I know young ministers who, with the best intentions, have yet made mistakes in the course of the first year which have lost them all influence with the congregation. It is always hard to regain one's ground ; and accordingly they grow dispirited and indifferent, more especially when the superintendent is only a bureaucratic pedagogue and not a sincere paternal friend to the young man, and he has no good neighbour to give him judicious and affectionate advice.

When I recall the state of the Church in the first anxious year of my own ministry, I must confess that very great changes have taken place since then, and I bless God that he has had mercy upon his Zion. No position in life has been so raised of late years as that of the minister. Formerly country clergymen were almost ashamed of owning their profession, and if they were travelling, or in places of public resort, would do all they could to conceal it, but now there is no temptation to do this ; indeed, of late, young men of good family are taking more and more to the study of theology, and candidates for orders marry into wealthy and noble families. Again, how isolated in those former days was the man who really believed from his heart in the Godhead of the Lord Jesus and the saving power of his blood. In the whole synod to which I first belonged, there was not a single pastor or preacher to whom I could pour out the distress of my heart. We met, indeed, annually, but we discussed



no other subject than the amount of the widows' fund. In our synodical book-club we had nothing but Schuderoff's *Annals*, Rohr's *Preacher's Library*, and the *Darmstadt Ecclesiastical Journal*. Certainly, through the old sacristan, I did sometimes get hold of a number of a then very young evangelical magazine, but it was lent me with the utmost precaution, for the old man did not want to have any difference with the pastor. In the parsonage we very rarely had any clerical visitors. I remember, indeed, a few being invited on one occasion, but not one word was said of our holy office, nor any anxiety expressed about our congregations, while it was discussed with utmost eagerness whether the dozen and a quarter of eggs that the farmers had to pay to the pastors meant fifteen or sixteen. Custom had been in favour hitherto of the more liberal interpretation, but certain farmers were now beginning to give only fifteen. In like manner we had much controversy as to the proper measure of corn due, and many complaints of the quality of that which the farmers now brought in.

It was customary at that time to play cards in most parsonages, and many a minister was little scrupulous in choosing his partner, so only the right number could be made up. Brandy, too, was freely drunk, and sometimes in excess, so that terrible rumours used to circulate among the parishioners. There was at that time a certain preacher in the neighbourhood, of whom I often heard as having the reputation of



being a good theologian ; and though I was warned against it, I rode off one day to pay him a visit. He was aware that I had studied in Berlin, and had evidently prepared himself to encounter and crush me. Rationalism was at that time so absolute in its possession of the Church and the people, that if, from time to time, some individual voice ventured to disturb its repose, it comported itself like a very Goliath towards that insignificant David—orthodoxy. Nevertheless, I found, spite of this man's zeal, that he had nothing better to oppose to the lash of one evangelical organ and the sharp sword of another than ridicule and abuse. For though at first Rationalism received the Church's declaration of war with indifference and contempt ; later it sought to defend itself by bitterness and all other carnal weapons.

As in our military ranks, those who have lived and fought through the time of national disgrace in 1806, and of national restoration in 1813, drop off one by one, and leave behind them an army outwardly well ordered and theoretically perfect, but who have never smelt powder ; so within the Church there has arisen a new generation, who never experienced the deluge of Rationalism, and never bore the reproach of the Lord. At the time I speak of, any candidate who had been awakened to a living faith took care not to betray his views at his examination, and a really believing pastor had not a chance of promotion. Every movement in the ecclesiastical domain was observed

with utmost suspicion, and put down by the authorities. The Union, which had already begun its persecution of the Lutheran Church in Pomerania and Silesia, had not yet pervaded our province with its angry strife. To me the question seemed then very remote, though it is true I had, while at the University, shared the prevalent enthusiasm for a strong and united Germany, and the union of the two churches seemed to me an admirable thing.

But I little thought that the colours, so holy in my eyes, would ever become the standard of rebellion and revolt, and as little could I foresee that the union would become the persecutor of the devoted adherents of the Church's Confession of Faith. The war waged between Revelation and Reason, between faith and unbelief, was at least open and honourable, and filled the soul with courage and cheerful energy; and the little flocks of believers were bound together by persecution and pressure from without, and by holy love and truth within. But the present warfare about Union and Confession is, on the contrary, unsound, weariful, enfeebling; and the weapons used therein are too often hatred, cunning, and passion, and these gain no victory and give no joy. In those earlier days we cried unto the Lord, and he gave us one conquest after another. The reproach of Christ is the token of truth, and that reproach was not wanting then. It helped a man on in no way to have the reputation of piety. The so-called intellectual world had entirely separated itself

from the Church. A nobleman who attended public worship, or an officer who read his Bible, was hardly to be found. The Church was looked upon as only fit for the ignorant and uncultivated. On one occasion I remember how, when walking back from the chapel-of-ease, I found a handsome carriage at the churchyard gate, which had just brought a neighbouring noble family to church. The whole village was in a flutter of astonishment, and the sacristan in utmost delight, because he had always had a certain respect for this particular family, though well-knowing that they never went to church. Some few people from the town would indeed make their appearance pretty often, and this was very useful to me, as helping to convince the rich farmers that there was no social disgrace in church-going.

Here is an illustration of the prevalent feeling of the time. A young man of noble birth, who farmed his father's estate, and with whom I had a slight acquaintance, often playing chess with him, had evidently a craving for better than earthly things. Our conversation occasionally turned upon the mysterious side of human life, upon the insufficiency of a vague trust in chance, destiny, or God's general laws to bring light out of darkness, or to fill an aching void; and upon the human heart's imperative need of faith in the living God. In connexion with these subjects, I would touch upon the influence of the father upon the son, exemplified in the course of history, as well as in in-

dividual cases. This led to frequent reference to the Old Testament, which was almost *terra incognita* to my friend. On one occasion, when I entered his room unexpectedly, he was sitting at his writing-table, and I observed that he hastily closed its drawer. A short time after he was called away. I peeped into the drawer and found an open Bible, and upon his return I asked why he so carefully concealed it while other books lay strewn about his table. His answer was, 'What would my servant think of me if he knew that I read the Bible.' Gradually this young man came to search more deeply after the way of salvation, but yet I never knew him go to church. Now-a-days, on the contrary, there are young officers and young lawyers who openly read their Bible and attend church. But, indeed, what was to be got in the church at that former time? Descriptions of the beauty of nature and sentimental twaddle was the best, to be had; a few domestic pictures; a good deal of moonshine; and some extracts from the tombstones around were the only means of edification. On one Good Friday I remember a pastor, who enjoyed the reputation of being a good pulpit orator, taking Pilate's words, 'What I have written I have written,' to exemplify the superiority of written to oral testimony, and drawing the inference that it would be well for his flock to leave written wills behind them, etc. In short, the Lord Jesus and his cross had vanished out of sight altogether, and the pastors prided themselves on

being called rationalists. The old hymns still sung, and Schubert's collection of sermons, one of which the sacristan was accustomed to read whenever the minister was sick, or otherwise kept away, afforded a singular contrast to the usual tone of the preaching. But Christian life is of a very enduring nature, and a church can bear a good deal without being altogether destroyed.

The great cry against the Pietists, as religious men were then called, was, that they judged and condemned other people; and upon one occasion, when I had been preaching upon the narrow way and the strait gate, my old pastor was a good deal disquieted, and found much fault with me. He was of opinion that all men were to be ultimately saved, for that God was too merciful to doom any man to eternal punishment. As to what he found in the Bible about hell and everlasting torment, such passages were, he opined, mere Eastern allegories, which a more enlightened reason was unable to accept. As to the infinite mercy of God manifested in the forgiveness of those who believe in Christ, he did not in the least apprehend it, because he looked upon the sacrifice of the Lord for us as a mere Judaizing doctrine, which had become quite obsolete. The yearning for companionship with those who understood me, and believed as I did in the real Godhead of the Saviour, often led me to the cottage of the old thatcher and the side of the old sacristan. The thatcher loved to speak of his father and

mother, and of a pious tailor now fallen asleep ; but his special spiritual food was old Spangenberg and Porst's hymn-book. The sacristan I found more reserved upon these subjects, but I had often remarked that every Wednesday he went to town, and returned very late ; and when I asked him what the urgent business was that led him there, since even when he was sick he went all the same, he replied by asking whether I would accompany him, saying he went to visit good people, whom I had already seen in church. I accepted his offer, and we drove off together. About eight o'clock in the evening he took me to the house of an old schoolmaster, with whose name I was familiar. We entered a large room where a few men and women, sitting on low benches, were already assembled, but not a word was said. Others kept silently dropping in for a while, and then the master of the house rose, gave out a few lines of a hymn, which were sung in very suppressed tones, and so on till it was finished. Then all fell upon their knees, and the old schoolmaster poured out a prayer which went to my heart. After that a sermon was read. Another prayer and hymn concluded the service, and silently and privately as it had assembled the meeting broke up, the members shaking hands as they parted. This was my first acquaintance with the conventicle, which was at that time more vehemently denounced and decried than vice and open sin. On our way back I sat silently by the side of the old sacristan,



whose parting words to me were, ‘ At all events you will not betray me.’

If such an idea as the fall of the Church ever occurred to my mind, it was that evening. A Church so deeply sunk as to hate and persecute the faithful, could it, I asked myself, be indeed the Church of God ? It is far more painful for the living members of Christ to bear oppression at the hand of a Christian than a heathen government. It was by her persecution of the Waldenses and the adherents of the martyr Huss, that the Catholic Church did herself the greatest harm, and brought about an inevitable secession from her ranks. She who neglects the education of her own children undermines her house. It is not indeed to be denied, that much that is morbid and unsound may have, from time to time, appeared in the conventicle, but in many cases accusations have been raised against it by its enemies who had themselves no understanding of the spiritual wants its members sought to satisfy ; and the unsound symptoms that actually exist must in fairness be attributed rather to the persecutions raised by Christ’s enemies than to any inherent mischief in the system itself. For instance, who can throw a stone against these people for their contempt of an ordained ministry ? I must confess that, on the other hand, I have often marvelled at their continuing to exhort each other so earnestly to go on attending the National Church ; for how wearisome it must have been, Sunday after Sunday, to listen to mere



empty verbiage or palpably false doctrine. A minister, who numbered in his congregation a few who were in earnest about their souls, and in the habit of meeting for prayer, could hardly preach a sermon without attacking them under the character of Pharisees, and holding them up to ridicule. Now it makes a great difference whether character develops in peace or strife. A child who becomes a believer, in a pious Christian family, grows up very unlike one whose faith leads him into opposition to his parents, and exposes him to contest and censure. A child has a divine right to be led by its parents to Christ, and the members of the congregation have the same right to require from the National Church sound spiritual nurture. If instead of living bread mere worldly husks are offered them, and ridicule and abuse into the bargain, who can wonder that they are driven out of the proper track?

A member of such a conventicle as the one I have described was once rebuked and warned by the local civil authority, and gave, as an apology for his conduct, the fact that the pastor preached false doctrine, and that consequently he was obliged to seek sustenance for his poor soul elsewhere. 'I have nothing to do with such subjects,' said the magistrate, 'they are out of my province.' To which the other replied, 'Sir, there is but one way of salvation, and it is as essential for a magistrate and nobleman to know it as for a poor day labourer.'

Whenever the National Church restricts and persecutes earnest and truly converted people, these must inevitably leave the country, or become dissenters, or decline in spiritual life. Bureaucracy has done mischief enough on earth already, and it is the twin sister of Democracy; but they are never so fatal as when they hold their sway in the Church; for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. Who could wonder if some of these poor people—thus forsaken and persecuted—did grow embittered when they saw that meetings for dancing, gaming, and drinking were everywhere allowed, and meetings for prayer and psalm-singing rigorously suppressed? That newspapers and periodicals, even of an immoral character, might be freely circulated, while disseminating tracts was looked upon as a dangerous thing?

Nevertheless, the Divine mercy has blessed the sorrows and prayers of these despised members of the conventicle, and they have been the pioneers and champions of a new and better era. The prosperous Bible societies and missions of the present day are the fruit of these obscure meetings, and have greatly tended to the awakening and animating the Church at large.

An acquaintance I made about this time with a pastor out of East Prussia, was to me a special source of consolation, and of strengthening in the faith. Once, when we were assembled in the house of that town schoolmaster, of whom I have spoken, after his

own prayer was over, a stranger rose and addressed us as the little flock whom the Lord had gathered round him. He admonished us most instantly to adorn our faith by a holy life, and to unite faithfulness in openly confessing the truth with deep and sincere humility. He dwelt with great clearness upon the way of salvation, and exhorted us to seek earnestly for acceptance, and to esteem the cross of Christ as a great honour if we were permitted to bear it. All hearts were deeply stirred by this address, and after the service I went up to him; and great as was my timidity, the cordiality and love with which he received me were greater still.

It was, in my opinion, a singular fact, that meetings such as these, in which there was apparently little to excite or to instruct, should yet make so deep an impression upon my mind. But I could distinctly observe that earnestness in prayer, carefulness as to daily conduct, yearning for grace, fervency of love and trust in the promises of the Lord, together with self-knowledge and a sincere determination to fight the good fight, were all increased and intensified within me each time I attended one of these meetings. There is, indeed, in Christian fellowship, and especially in united prayer, a might and efficacy which can only be experimentally appreciated. No doubt the two great means of grace—the word of God and the holy sacraments—are sufficient for salvation when rightly used; but intercourse with be-

lievers, communion with the members of the Lord's body, is also a channel of grace, and of the Holy Spirit. Before the day of Pentecost, Christ commanded his disciples to remain together, and wait for the promise of the Father. After his resurrection, he showed himself to such of them as were gathered together with closed doors, for fear of the Jews; and Thomas, who had separated himself from the rest, only saw him eight days later, and when he had returned to their company. It was in the secret meetings of Christians by night in woods and desert places, that the martyrs found faith and courage to suffer death.

Spener's great and successful exertions in the cause of the Church were traceable to prayer-meetings; and in our own time, the much-despised conventicles have been the means of conversion and growth in grace to numbers. It is a mistake to suppose that the public services of the Church have an equal efficacy; this could only be so if the majority were really spiritually alive, as we are told, by those who have spent a Sunday there, is the case in Hermannsburg. The power of preaching lies not only in the speaker, but in the praying congregation who hear his word. The branch severed from the vine withers; the limb removed from the body decays; he who will be a member of Christ's body, must be closely united with other members if he would share in the healthy flow of the saving blood and spirit. For

many natures, an isolated position has almost insuperable difficulties. We can only love the Lord if we love his body ; and he who willingly severs himself from his fellow Christians treads a perilous path. The Son of God was not ashamed to identify himself with his people. He did not say to Saul, ‘ Why persecutest thou my disciples ? ’ but, ‘ Why persecutest thou me ? ’ And the humblest service done to one of his, he looks upon as done to himself, and will not allow to go unrewarded.

It was striking to me to notice, that between those who attended this conventicle differences of rank seemed nearly effaced. They were willingly recognised, indeed, on the side of the inferior, but ignored on the other. There was a singular cordiality and brotherly feeling amongst all, and a ready acceptance of mutual help, but the general point of view seemed to be, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. It was enjoined upon each, individually, to exert himself silently for God’s cause ; and there was great rejoicing when some poor sinner was brought in for the first time, and sought for spiritual peace. Separation from the world and its pleasures was specially enforced. Card-playing, dancing, frequenting the public houses, or the theatres, held decided tokens of an unconverted, unrepentant condition, and peculiarly lamentable on the part of the clergy.

Another thing struck me a good deal ; the members from far and near seemed so intimately acquainted.

Travellers from other districts were most lovingly received ; and there was great delight shown whenever a stranger came in as a friend, and told of the trials and successes of the brethren in different provinces, especially if it were announced that here and there a pastor began to preach the truth, and seriously to insist upon repentance and regeneration.

A third feature that I noticed was, that all of this way of thinking, however much they suspected regularly ordained ministers and church authorities, yet appeared to place heartfelt confidence in the king. They were universally persuaded that his majesty personally was well inclined towards them ; averse himself to persecution and vexatious police restrictions, but deceived by false reports. The king was invariably prayed for with the utmost affection. There was an old farmer who lived in a distant parish, and with whom I became acquainted later, whose father had been awakened through the hymns of Woltersdorff, and who had himself walked in God's ways from his youth, and could say all Woltersdorff's hymns by heart ; this worthy had for long years been much distressed at his pastor preaching false doctrine. At length he could bear it no longer. The pastor had, it seems, one favourite aphorism that he was in the constant habit of repeating, ' Virtue and uprightness are the way to heaven,' and each time the old farmer heard it, it was an offence to him. Indeed, he had entreated the pastor to leave it off as being unsound.



But one Sunday when the obnoxious sentence again came in, up rose the farmer, and in a loud voice cried, 'Brethren, do not believe this ; you may be lost with your virtue and uprightness ; Christ's blood and righteousness are the way to heaven.' The consequence of which was that he was taken up for brawling in church. After his term of imprisonment was over, he went again to see the pastor, and implored him to discontinue the phrase, but all in vain. Nay, still worse, once when upon a visit to his cousin, the sacristan, he saw the book of homilies, which the latter had to read in church, lying on the table, and taking it up found that the pastor had scratched out many passages, and replaced them by marginal amendments of his own, to his favourite tune of 'virtue and uprightness !' The good farmer who, like the rest of his class, had a profound respect for printed books, held this tampering with one to be a grievous crime, and as he well knew that he should have no redress from the local authorities, he determined to write to the king and accuse the pastor. But he met with difficulties at the post-office (especially connected with the book, which he had wrapped in a handkerchief, and wanted to send with the letter), which led to his resolving to go himself to Berlin. Accordingly, dressed in his best, with blue velvet furred cap, and one great spur on his left foot (only knights were privileged to wear two spurs), he at length reached the royal residence, and making his way in, was asked by some



military official what he wanted there. But his embarrassments were not over, the military personage took charge of the letter indeed, but would have nothing to do with the book, whereas the poor farmer laboured hard to prove to him that the letter would only be understood by reference to the book, which was there to show the way in which the pastor had tampered with it. During the discussion, the king himself appeared on the staircase, and as soon as the farmer saw him, down he fell on his knees, holding up his book. The king gave him an audience, and assured him the matter should be inquired into by the government ; at which the farmer again dropped on his knees, and implored the king himself to appoint a believing pastor, for, as to the government, there was no help to be had from it, seeing it was entirely composed of men who thought to be saved by virtue and uprightness. His majesty spoke very graciously to the old man, and dismissed him. Not long after, the pastor left off officiating, retaining indeed his income, but giving up his pulpit to an assistant, who was paid from the royal purse. So the story ran ; and it strengthened the confidence already reposed in the king. The farmer himself was reluctant to speak of it, considering it bad for him, as ministering to the pride of the old Adam within him. The early Fathers used to speak of Christ's threefold cross : first, the cross of punishment, by which the Good Shepherd drives his sheep to the fold ; next, the cross of temptation,

which the converted carry to further their growth in grace ; and, lastly, the cross of honour which the martyrs wear ; and it is certain that this last cross is the hardest of the three to carry aright, since it has a tendency to awaken spiritual pride, that worst of all diseases. But the old farmer had shoulders that could bear even this latter cross.

These conventicles of which we have been speaking—lodges in the wilderness, as it were—were not to be destroyed by the policy or the ridicule of the world ; but they may be said to have virtually come to an end so soon as God's living word was to be heard in the churches, and ministers began to hold Bible and prayer meetings themselves. Yet it must be owned that these are very different to what they replace. At first there were but few, and those very exceptional, pastors who took the work in hand, and they met with loving gratitude. But gradually it became a point of etiquette, so to speak, that every minister who did not want to pass for a Rationalist should have Bible-meetings ; while the fact that something more was needed than merely the absence of positive opposition to the gospel, was too often overlooked. No serious and careful preparation was made for them, and frequently nothing was given but a dry and wearisome exposition, or an unconnected, wandering discourse. And so the once numerous-attended Bible-meetings, which people preferred to call prayer-meetings, lost their hold upon public sym-

pathy. The fact is, the reproach of Christ encamped round the conventicle, and kept the door shut against the intrusion of the world ; while, on the other hand, a spirit of fervent, brotherly love abode therein, and the prayer put up came from the heart, and united all the members in loving devotion to the Lamb upon the throne. This early dew, this morning freshness, is too often lacking now, especially when the meetings are held merely for credit's sake. At first, too, faithful pastors would hold them in their own houses, more particularly in their libraries ; but soon they were transferred to the cold, empty church ; every now and then on the ground of the minister's wife objecting to the disturbance of so much coming and going in the house ; and so they more and more assumed the character of a mere weekday evening service.

I may here observe, that the most difficult portion of a pastor's duty will always consist of his relation to the awakened. One who lives like the guardian of a churchyard may be undisturbed enough if he is fond of sleeping. If he leaves the congregation alone they will be sure to like him up to a certain point, and the superintendent will probably pronounce all things in excellent order. But new-born children often cry a good deal, fall sick easily, have all manner of troublesome ways, and only motherly love and motherly patience can bear with them. And just as a child very soon finds out who really loves him, these other

new-born babes exercise a delicate discrimination in the bestowal of their confidence, and soon determine whether the language used in addressing them is a foreign tongue, learnt from the book, or whether it is spoken by a true citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

When my painful anxiety about the composition of my sermons had somewhat abated, I began to discover that my professional duties did not fill up my time. The transition from my university career to a wholly practical kind of life had been so sudden and abrupt, that at first I almost seemed to have lost my identity. The novelty of my duties had so taxed all my powers as to engross my mind entirely. But gradually a love for my former interests rekindled. The country minister has, indeed, often too little to do, and that is still worse than if he had too little to eat. Many have deteriorated through too much anxiety about their daily bread, but more still through slipper-and-dressing-gown ease. Poverty may brace the character, and through faith in God its distress may be so endured as to promote the divine glory and the good of souls ; but want of occupation makes a man good for nothing. If you examine a young pastor very closely as to what he has done throughout the past week, from Monday morning till Saturday evening, how much positive work will appear ? I am no friend to diaries in general, but still it is use-

ful to give one's-self from time to time an exact account of how one's life has been employed. In small cures the ministerial duties occupy but little time, and although a pastor must of course have his hours of retirement, and his work can hardly be measured like that of another man, still he ought to be in the habit of examining himself as to the positive employment of his days. If soon after entering upon his office he throws his books aside, and occupies himself with exegesis only so far as his sermon actually requires it ; or begins to think it unnecessary to compose his sermon carefully beforehand,—either because he believes himself possessed of a gift of readiness given only to a few ; or else that anything will do for farmers—then there is the greatest danger of a rapid mental and moral falling off. For what can such a man do the whole week long ? The care of souls is a comprehensive expression, but very often it stands for what, in point of fact, amounts to very little. There are long seasons in the country when the people have so much to do that the most zealous of pastors can hardly get at them ; and as to the sick, often there are none for him to visit. As for reading the periodicals or newspapers which, in their course through the Synod, sometimes come very late to the individual, this cannot be called work,—this should be the relaxation of some else unoccupied hour. Unless the pastor is to sink into the merest commonplace, it is absolutely essential that he should have some special study

to nourish his intellect, and sustain his thoughts above everyday matters. If nothing higher than the care of his house, his garden, or his land, take up his time, if his mind is constantly revolving in the narrow circuit of personal interests, his horizon must necessarily contract, the wretched gossip and tittle-tattle of the village will at length draw him down to its own level, and he will be the bond-slave of a merely material existence. In such a case as this some take to hoarding, some to coarser vices. The devil's very stronghold is idleness, and he is particularly given to lay snares for ministers. It is just because a retired country life offers so little excitement, and opportunities of conversing with cultivated men are so rare, that it is the more necessary earnestly to take up some branch of study, in order that the mind may have a sphere beyond the narrow confines of the village, and other pleasure-grounds than the parsonage garden and the parsonage farm. It is a wholesome process to examine, from time to time, what thoughts fill the mind when one is riding to one's chapel-of-ease or on one's way to visit a neighbour. Birds, be it remembered, will forget to fly if they spend their lives in a cage.

In former days it was usual for each pupil at the gymnasium to take up some course or other with special attention, one fixing on history, another on philosophy, a third devoting himself to the classics. At the university this particular branch, whatever it



was, was carried on further. Now, my hobby had always been mathematics, and the very few books that I had were almost all mathematical. The works of Lacroix, his Differential and Integral Calculus, were at that time in great vogue, and now that I could manage to do so, I gladly returned to these my old friends. Mathematics is indeed a most useful branch of study, because of its effect upon the human mind. Its necessary truth, the inevitable connexion between one step and the next, the concentration which it demands, the distress it creates while a problem remains obscure, the delight its solution affords, exactly fit the science for the solitary student, and the ancients named it with good right, *medicina mentis*. I also brought out my Shakspeare again, and Livy, who had always been a prime favourite of mine. And so my old love for study revived ; and strange as it may seem to some, I soon found it imperative to make a regular division of my time. The morning hours, both before and after I paid my visit to the school, were devoted to theology, Spener's Catechism, which my father had given me, being repeatedly gone through, and leading often to exegetical questions, I found it difficult to solve. I was obliged to beware of mathematics the last days of the week, lest its fascination for me should interfere with that concentrated thinking over the gospel for the day essential to the preparation of my Sunday's sermon. As for Livy and Shakspeare,



I reserved them for my recreation, and only took them up in the afternoon.

If a school-boy at his lessons thinks exclusively of his place in his class, or as a collegian cares only for the result of his examination, he loses the liberty of love, and becomes a mere day-labourer for wages ; and it is only natural that the examination once over, books should be thrown aside, and the mind should grovel in the dust. What strange pleasures, to be sure, have I known country pastors driven to through mere *ennui*, so that in the course of a few years they showed no trace of ever having had a liberal education, and people pronounced them grown utterly boorish. It certainly is a great misfortune, even now, that the young minister should have so little guidance, encouragement, and supervision. It is no one's place positively to interfere with him ; and the superintendent is often quite satisfied if he behaves himself decorously, is on good terms with the congregation, and keeps his registers and reports regularly and in order. But of late some superintendents have begun to hold periodical conferences ; and small as the results of these may as yet be, they show a beginning of spiritual activity ; and unless the synod is a very small one, some men are sure to be found therein who exercise a healthy and stimulating influence upon the younger members, and awake a love of study and scientific inquiry.

Meanwhile the end of my first ministerial year had

come round ; the harvest had begun again ; the yellow fields were waiting the reaper. The year that lay behind me now, had indeed been fraught with difficulties, but was also rich in experience. At the University I kept a little pocket-book, in which, from time to time, as a theological student, I used to enter my plans and ideas concerning my future career ; but how utterly different my actual life had been from the future my imagination had drawn. How slow plants are in growing ; how long must the gardener wait before a seed becomes a sapling, and a sapling bears fruit ! The word of God is the seed, the congregation the garden ; but how slowly the seed comes up, how much of it falls by the way and is trodden down, how much falls amongst thorns and the thorns choke it ! How great God's patience is the while ! The old sacristan used, indeed, to say that God's word is like winter wheat which lies long hid beneath frost and snow, but yet surely comes up in spring-time ; and truly this spring is of God's bringing, not man's, but still we anxiously ask, When will spring be here ?

At all events some positive progress was made, in that many of my proud and presumptuous imaginings were at an end, and I was fully convinced that I was not the man to awaken a sleeping congregation. But the visible results of my labours were small. The school was better attended, the church somewhat better filled, but of what avail was this ? As to my next neigh-

bour, he held his course in much weakness. I was often exceedingly anxious about him; the old sacristan would not acknowledge him a convert, and held that there is no such thing as hobbling through the strait gate. What gave me most satisfaction was that the old pastor not only came regularly to church, and took pleasure in discussing the sermons, but I not unfrequently found him in the garden and even in his own room with the New Testament in his hand. It is an exceedingly difficult thing for young ministers to enter into controversy with their older brethren. One thing is certain, the latter do not like to be set right by their juniors. Indeed, genuine humility and diffidence are essential fruits of faith; and where these are wanting, even the maintenance of true doctrine may do more harm than good. And I am bound also to confess that, at the time I speak of, there were several rationalistic pastors who really led pious and holy lives, and were much better in practice than theory, just as there are now some who give themselves out as orthodox, but do not live up to their creed even in mere external matters. In synodical meetings a young minister is, in my opinion, bound to listen more than to speak, to remember that he has two ears and but one mouth, and above all, to beware of putting himself too much forward in any way. Of course, if the superintendent requests him to take up any particular subject he must do so; but while he devotes all his energy and industry to

it, he should carefully avoid attacking those who hold different views. I repeat it, there were formerly rationalist ministers who led a prayerful life, and had regular family worship in their houses, and there are orthodox ministers now-a-days who do not even set a good example in this respect.

To return to my own case : at first it had indeed been disagreeable to the old pastor to see several in the parish inclined to show me more affection and respect than to him, but now he positively seemed to rejoice in this, especially as he found that here and there the word of God was making its way, and he would readily tell me any encouraging fact that might come before him. I often heard him exclaim, *O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos !* and, conscious of the good gifts which had been lent him, he would raise his right hand when speaking of the presumption of youth, or the sins of age, and cry, '*Quos ego !*' My affection for him went on increasing, and I tried to recompense his kindly consideration for me by my devotedness and gratitude. The congregation had gradually come to perceive that I preached different doctrines to those they had been previously accustomed to ; and if some were displeased at this, others were gratified, and the affection of the children, which I had been happy in securing, was my support and shield with all parties alike. In some houses they began to bring out again their old hereditary

sermon-books, and the pious thatcher was no longer the only one who read them.

On the anniversary of my arrival I went as usual to the school. I was struck with my fatherly friend, the sacristan and schoolmaster, having donned his Sunday coat, and even his boots. As I entered, he made a sign, and the children stood up and sang—

‘Although in us sin still be found,  
Though oft, alas! we fall,  
God’s grace shall over sin abound,  
And bring us safe through all;’

after which he read out the 103d Psalm very solemnly, and, looking full at me with his kind, intelligent eyes, held out his hand in silence. I understood and thanked him, and then the school went on as usual. That evening I walked up to the great stone on the road by which I had knelt on my arrival, and again humbled myself before God. It is true that I was still so full of difficulties and conflict that I bemoaned myself even more than I gave thanks, but when I returned to the house and took up my Bible, I could fully appropriate the comfort of the apostle’s words, ‘He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Christ.’

## II.

## PREFERMENT.

BEFORE the expiration of my first ministerial year, I received from a private patron an appointment to a living with three churches and a large income. But this circumstance, which would have delighted many a candidate, filled me with disquietude. For although I could not hesitate about accepting such a call, my heart was closely bound to the scenes in which I had lived and worked, and full of fear lest my feeble powers should prove inadequate to these new and increased claims. My present charge might, indeed, be losing little, but not so I. We cleave most tenaciously to what has occasioned us the greatest trouble. The mother loves that child most fondly for whom she has most trembled, wept, and prayed. Our first love is always our strongest. There is no year in my professional life of which the recollections are so lively as of this first year, and my dreams often carry me back to it. I was not, however, to enter upon my new duties for twelve months; and even before I sat

down to express my thanks to my patron, I had taken the resolve to spend this interval in faithfully labouring amongst my present flock, and seeking as much as possible to make up for lost time. It was soon known in the village that my departure was a settled thing, and the only feeling of the majority was that I was a very lucky man to have got a good appointment so early; very few expressed a wish that I could have stayed on, while I, on my side, felt it a pang to part. But it is in the nature of things that a pastor should love his flock collectively more than he can possibly be loved by them. Nevertheless the old sacristan was evidently sincere when he said, 'I should have been glad, if it had been God's will, to have had you to bury me.'

In all external matters this second year ran its course much like its forerunner, although the knowledge that my connexion with the flock was so soon to cease, could not fail to have an influence upon them as well as upon me. Formerly my prayers, my plans, my silent hopes had been concentrated upon this school and this congregation; now, schemes for the future would often intrude. It is very true that my position had never been a permanent one, but my occupations, and the interest I took in them, had so absorbed me that I had never looked beyond. In after life I have often moved from one cure to another, but these times of transplantation have always been painful to me, and yet I must needs thank God



that I did not remain where I was first placed. The sentimental picture of a pastor growing gradually old, and at length dying amongst his first flock, may be a pleasing one, but it involves ideal and almost impossible circumstances. It sounds indeed well that an aged minister should have spent, peacefully and profitably, thirty, forty, nay, fifty years, amongst a people almost every one of whom had been baptized by him, and whom he had taught and counselled throughout life's vicissitudes ; but this implies a pastor and a flock such as we find in romances, not real life. A young and zealous man is sure on entering his sacred office to make at first divers blunders ; he will inevitably fall into unfortunate relations with some individuals, if not with the community at large ; if, then, he remains on with them very long, it is likely enough that he will grow shy and embarrassed, and shrink more and more into his home life, confining his ministerial activity to his Sunday sermon and to mere externals. Many a man has set out with high aspirations, but the mistakes that he originally made through inexperience have resulted in subsequent inactivity, and too often in mutual bitterness of feeling. A pastor who has lost his courage and confidence, loses at length the energy to perform even his most imperative duties.

Neither is it desirable for the congregation to have always the same pastor. There is great diversity of gifts amongst men, and what suits some does not suit

others. It often happens that certain members who are inaccessible to one pastor are won over by his successor. There are ministers who have the gift of awakening, and who at first make a strong impression ; these should not be stationary too long, for they soon get wearied, and feel depressed if the excitement subside. I remember a man of this stamp writing to me, 'I have fished out the pool, and shall not have one other bite.' His zeal for conversion had been successful in the case of numbers, and they were devoted to him, but others were repelled, and opposed him vehemently, and he was made unhappy by this. His successor, who had rather the gift of building up and spiritually nurturing, was much blessed in his subsequent labours.

As to the question whether a minister ought to apply for a vacant post or wait till he be called to it, it is a difficult one to answer. I have in the course of my life twice applied, but unsuccessfully. Nor, indeed, can the principle of accepting a call, when made, be invariably acted on.

There are at the present time patrons who pay scarcely any attention to the applications they may receive, but travel about instituting searching inquiries respecting different pastors, and choosing accordingly. And even amongst the council of magistrates there are individual men whose choice is not solely guided by personal relations and external circumstances, but who really take the special difficulties

of the post, and the requirements of the congregation, into earnest consideration. It has happened to myself to have four members of such a council attend my preaching twice, unknown to me, and then come and ask me whether I would accept a call from them. It were well indeed if all patrons were equally conscientious and faithful ; but hitherto patronage has been rarely thus bestowed, nor can one wonder that here and there the wish is uttered that it could be withdrawn from its present possessors and vested elsewhere. The fundamental idea which connected patronage with government authority, or with the possession of land, was doubtless a sound one ; but when magistrates, as is too often the case, belong to a class that seldom appears in church except on high festivals, frequents the theatre far more, is tainted by neology or even scepticism, pastors will too probably be chosen who suit but the careless and profane, while the poor souls who would gladly hear the word of God are spiritually starved. It is certainly very hard that the choice should lie with those in whose opinion ministers are only of use as performing certain official functions in a legal manner, and who have scarcely any idea of the deeper significance and higher duties of the sacred calling. Some degree of fitness is required of a man for every other post, but the disposal of Church patronage is conceded even to an enemy of the Church. Here is a case in point : A pious and highly-gifted pastor applied for a certain living ; after

he had preached his probationary sermon he was invited to dine at the Castle. Now, he was accustomed to say grace before meat, and, accordingly, on this occasion he clasped his hands under the table and bowed his head. After dinner the patron called him aside, and said, 'I like open dealing, and therefore I tell you plainly that I remember nothing to find fault with in your sermon, but your departure from the customs of my family gives me much concern. What is to be done,—since I am accustomed to be on friendly terms with the pastor, and often to ask him to dinner,—what is to be done, if your habits stir questions in my home-circle, the solution of which disturbs the peace of the house?' This good man was not chosen! No doubt many patrons have had fruitlessly to repent the consequences of a carelessly-made choice of pastor and schoolmaster. The Church authorities have no motive to transfer an inactive pastor from a post under private patronage to a living in the king's gift, and it is not always possible to get rid of him in any way.

The most frequent motive that leads a man to desire preferment is the wish to increase his income. It is all very well for those who are ignorant of the distress of many a poor pastor to whom God has given a large family, to enforce waiting on, in all cases, till a call comes; but one who has been admitted behind the scenes in some parsonages where the annual means hardly amount to 400 thalers (about £60),

may well waver in so stern a theory. If this meagre income be combined with a wife who lacks the skill to make a little go a long way, we may guess how easily care and discontent invade the home and break down the minister's spirit, till every vacancy that can promise a better income awakens the restless yearning to move. In no profession are incomes more unequal than in the Church. They vary between 300 and 3000 thalers, and yet all require the same education and the same duties. Now, if one's nearest neighbour happens to have a light and pleasant cure with twice or thrice one's own income, and to be a younger man besides, it may really be a difficult matter to possess one's soul in proper patience and content.

The Magdeburg consistory has of late years expressed its strong disapprobation of any applications being made to it, and it has by so doing taken upon itself a heavy responsibility. Owing to the great extent of the consistorial circle, an intimate personal acquaintance with the members is almost out of the question, and it is rare to find a general superintendent who knows all the pastors of his district. And, again, just as it is a recommendation to a young girl to be little spoken of, so they are not the worst pastors who are the least heard of. An old minister who had filled the same poor cure for fifty years, once said: 'In the first ten years I made sundry applications, but since then all my petitions have been addressed above, and

have received the gracious answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and since this answer came, I really have had enough, and have left off all applications.' Yea, truly, he who has this lofty faith is ever rich! But a minister has need to pray instantly for such faith, and also for cheerfulness in poverty. I remember going with an aged brother to a synod in a town. He wore the very same coat in which he had been ordained and married, and certainly it was decidedly out of fashion. As we passed, the boys were coming out of school, and one called out to another, 'Did you ever see such a coat as that?' The pastor, however, turning round, said, in the kindest way possible, 'My son, I have several children for whom I must buy coats; I have long left off caring about my own.' The boy went away thoroughly ashamed.

This great difference in the endowment of ministers is a disagreeable motive, it must be owned, for the desire of the clergy to change their sphere, but a very difficult one to get rid of. All propositions hitherto made for overcoming this evil are either wholly impracticable, or would place other and even worse difficulties in its stead. If the number of the ill-paid cures were small, so that they could be regarded as merely temporary posts to be held by young beginners, something might be done, but unfortunately they are very numerous. Highly gifted young men, indeed, do not long remain ill provided for, but others who labour faithfully and well, have to fight with care, and indeed



positive distress, all their lives. A long course of wretched farming of glebe lands, the diminution in the value of money, and the increase of artificial wants in the present day, all add to their difficulties. It is easy to say that the minister should show the power and efficacy of his faith by bearing poverty with unbroken spirit, but sometimes it is not he alone, but his wife and children who have to suffer, and sometimes the peculiar graces requisite for this achievement may be constitutionally wanting. Another thing that adds to the difficulty of the case is, that the free-will offerings the congregation used to make to the minister are either more sparingly given now-a-days, or have altogether ceased. In short, in many districts, especially in Silesia, and Lusace, this question of endowment is become so critical as seriously to compromise the very existence of an evangelical Church.

Again, the divisions between a pastor and his flock are often adduced as valid motives for desiring a change. No doubt that dissent, church-building and repairs, disputes as to privileges and rights, may easily arise to poison the life of a poor pastor, especially if the provincial councillors, or the judge, or the commissioners manage affairs so as, directly or indirectly, to make the pastor seem covetous or quarrelsome, and treat him in a disrespectful and humiliating manner. I know no course to take, in a case like this, but to bear it with patience and resignation ; to



watch and pray against bitterness of feeling ; and to remember that we are followers of Him who bore the sins of the whole world, and who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not. If the pastor win in such a dispute as this, he often loses part of his congregation for years. If he is defeated, his importance and influence are diminished for a still longer period. As to a move to another parish, he should only make it when the difference is perfectly adjusted, else his successor will inherit the same odium. But if the pastor has undermined his happy relations with his flock by any fault of his own—by pride, covetousness, thriftlessness, dishonourable dealings, misuse of the pulpit or neglect of his official duties—why, he must reap what he has sown, however bitter it may be. To free him from his painful position by giving him another cure, could only be justifiable in the event of his earnest repentance. If disagreements such as these were once made a reason for giving up one cure for another, it would become indeed an easy matter to change. The Church authorities must exercise their discretion in such a case ; must protect the congregation, not encourage and reward the offender. And as to the patron who has appointed the minister, he must pay the penalty for the unwise choice he or his father made.

There is another reason which makes a change anxiously sought after, and that is the inherent differ-

ences between the inhabitants of town and country. Young ministers born and educated in cities find it difficult to get on in country parishes. Very often they bring with them a contemptuous estimate of farmers and labourers, and think that they must let themselves down to their level. And as soon as the latter discover that their pastor considers himself their superior, and assumes a condescending manner in his intercourse with them, it is all over with his chance of doing good. Least of all can country people tolerate any artificial, affected attempt at 'doing the popular' on the part of the minister or his wife, and secretly viewing them as simple and stupid. They are far more shrewd than is generally supposed. Then the pastor's wife, a town lady perhaps, may not like her position. The house is too small or too humble-looking ; her garden is not a pretty one ; the kitchen chimney smokes ; the cellar is under water in the spring ; the retirement is unbearable, or the neighbourhood dull. She thoughtlessly complains to her maid, who straightway carries it into the village. Or perhaps neither husband nor wife knows much of house-keeping ; they try to live as town's-people do ; but their income proves insufficient. The pastor preaches above the comprehension of the people, of whom he really knows nothing ; the church grows more and more empty. He thinks that if he were but in a town, his talents would meet with due recognition. The habit he falls into of attributing his want of acceptance to

the stupidity of his flock, not to any defect of his own, quiets his conscience indeed, but rouses anger and opposition in them. And no doubt the preacher in the city has an easier task than his country brother. His congregation is larger ; *natural* endowments find more who are attracted by such. The pastor of some small country district has a very difficult lesson to learn : faithfulness in little things. Each youth, each child, each useless man, weighs upon his spirits. He must take thought for them all ; must often seek to conciliate them in a manner trying to his own pride. Now, in the town, ten may remain away unnoticed : ten others will come in their places. But, on the other hand, the country pastor has the great advantage of coming into more intimate relations with his flock, and of thoroughly knowing individuals. He who is faithful over little, shall be set over much. A thorough experience of any single thing, a thorough knowledge of any one heart, is better than a wide, superficial acquaintance with many. The care of souls, in the true sense of the term, is indeed only to be learnt in a small congregation. It is not enough to be conversant, or to flatter one's-self that one is so, with some cases of spiritual experience here and there ; one must be able to watch and guide, and attend intimately to each with earnest intercession and affectionate interest.

A preacher in one of our neighbouring districts had laboured, as he believed, zealously and faith-

fully for many years without seeing any result of his labours. He began to feel low-spirited, and to wish for a change. His doctor sent him to a sea-bathing place. In the neighbourhood dwelt a minister, whose reputation for usefulness was widely spread; the stranger paid him a visit, and attended his church. He saw the power of God's word exemplified in the behaviour of the large congregation, and lamented his own depressing case to his more successful brother. 'I, too, preach the gospel, but I make no effect.' 'Art thou thyself converted?' was the reply. He knew not what answer to make, and the other minister went on: 'The main point is, that thou shouldst thyself be converted, then the congregation, or at all events some among them, are sure to follow thee.' Our friend went back to his cure with this question, 'Art thou converted?' ringing in his ears, and it daily became more importunate. The tame, conventional, and laboured sermons he had been wont to deliver began to weary him, and whenever he sat down to compose one, he was haunted by this question as to his own conversion. Soon after he had applied himself to answering it—at first, indeed, in the negative, then in a joyful affirmative—there began to be a stir in the congregation, and finally, it became one of the centres of spiritual life of the neighbourhood. The conversion of the head, of the intellect, suffices indeed for the preaching of detached truths; but *the truth*, the whole

truth, can only be set forth by one who lives in it with heart and soul ; and the 'praying in Christ's stead' is only possible to those who really know something experimentally of the love of Christ, his seeking, saving, love to sinners. Now, farmers and labourers have a much more acute ear for this than half, or even wholly, educated classes in the town. The instinct with which children take to people, or turn away, according as these have or have not a sincere love for them, is very remarkable ; and simple village people have much the same intuitive perception as to the spiritual state of their pastor. Mere orthodoxy, mere natural endowments, will not please them long ; they soon find out that the one thing needful is wanting, and they draw back. A working man once said, 'Our pastor preaches fine, but when pastor N—— preached here once, it was as sweet as honey.' Amongst the signs that are to accompany the days of the Son of man, the prophets and the Lord himself give prominence to the preaching of the gospel to the poor ; and a true pastor must seek to afford this evidence, and must esteem it as the highest of his privileges. The preacher in the city is very easily led to direct his teaching chiefly to the rich and distinguished. And, indeed, provided all is done decently and in order, these are the more easy to satisfy. Natural ability will generally insure success in the early years of a man's life, though it will not retain it, as the history of many a once admired city minister proves. But to all pastors

who wish to change their sphere because of their want of success, we strongly recommend that they look out for the cause in themselves, and be not too ready to assume that it must needs lie in the congregation, or in any external circumstance.

To sum up, then. Although, in my opinion, a pastor cannot be blamed if, under the strong pressure of circumstances, he apply for preferment, still there is something very undignified and reprehensible in making such applications repeatedly. No one, indeed, thoroughly understands the laws according to which the Almighty apportions earthly possessions to men ; but still no one would venture to maintain that the rich stand higher in the Divine favour than the poor. And our Lord and Saviour chose poverty and a low estate as his personal lot when he came among us, thereby teaching us that these are no disgrace in the sight of God, and least of all in the case of a minister. The true Christian has always a treasure, and if he but contemplate it enough, worldly possessions will lose, in his eyes, that overweening value which worldly men assign to them. The pastor is often taught by observation that wealth cannot confer happiness, can still less bring peace to the soul ; he should remember that this holds true of good livings and comfortable parsonages. A superintendent once said of a naturally gifted pastor, whose course had been one of unbroken prosperity from his university days upwards—‘That our brother M—— should make so



little impression upon his flock, is only explicable to me by the fact of his being without any experience of life's troubles and anxieties.'

Again, it must not be overlooked that old divines, whose authority is deservedly respected by the Church, as, for example, Gerhard and Spener, have very decidedly expressed their disapprobation of applications by the clergy for a change of benefice. Just as the possibility of divorce desecrates the marriage tie, and diminishes its sacred solemnity, so we observe that the looking out for other cures does not tend to sanctify and exalt the relations between minister and people; rather it brings in an element of unrest, and promotes impatience instead of mutual repentance and amendment. To which we may add, that many pastors, in their anxiety to better their condition, reckon without their host, and find, too late, that they have not attained their end. There is a great fund of patience and consolation in staying where God has placed us, and enduring what God has assigned. If, in our self-will, we run into the fire, we have no promise that it shall not burn us.

One preferment, however, there is, which is sure to come, and that without any application made to patrons or to councils; when the evening is come, the Lord of the vineyard will say to his steward, 'Call the labourers, and give them their hire.' He who fills his office faithfully, and with a single eye to this reward, will not find it difficult to wait a while in con-



tentment and patience in the place appointed him—for the evening is not far off. Then the question will not be, ‘What was thy clerical income; how much of it hast thou left behind thee?’ but, ‘What use didst thou make of the talents intrusted to thee?’ Then it will not be asked if the field of labour lay in the garden or the wilderness. What more is required of the steward than that he be found faithful? The brilliant gifts admired of men, and their visible results, no doubt help on a man’s promotion here below, but not that final promotion of which we speak; for the rich shall hardly enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of God. Perhaps there be but few ministers who shall be saved; but one thing is certain, he only who is faithful shall wear the crown, he who is faithful over a few things shall be ruler over many. We who are constantly teaching to others how, through much tribulation, the kingdom of God must be entered, shall we not learn the lesson ourselves? We who are so ready to console others with the prospect of eternity, when all tears shall be wiped away, all care and sorrow ended, shall we not ourselves look up to the Author and Finisher of faith, who might have had the joy of Heaven, but chose to bear the cross, and despise the shame, and now sitting at God’s right hand, says to his people, ‘Where I am, there shall also my servant be.’ Ah, Lord, so only we be thine, let all else go, in heaven or earth, we will willingly wait till thy preferment come!

But we must take another case into our consideration. It may not please God to grant strength for work to the end of life, he may give his servant a period of retirement and repose on earth. The question as to the proper time to seek for a retiring pension and resign active duty, is a difficult one to answer. The natural man within us is very conceited, and apt to rate his gifts higher than they deserve. He lays claim to a wider usefulness than he possesses, flatters himself that the congregation feel greater love and reverence than they really do, persuades us at last that we are quite essential, while at the very time people may be wishing to get rid of us! Growing old and growing weak is generally a very gradual process; just as we do not notice the growth of the child with whom we daily are, so the diminution of our own faculties is the last thing that we discover. It is no doubt very natural and very excusable that men should retain office too long, but it is an evil for all that. One who has never done much more in his benefice than to consume its revenues, and get through its outward duties, will, indeed, find it especially difficult to draw the line where this do-nothing career should cease. For, as to the ideal beautiful relations between the aged pastor and the flock he has brought up, this, as we have before said, presupposes almost ideal characters. Far more commonly the old man, through selfishness or the delusions of vanity, retains his post longer than he

ought, to the injury of his parish. In our days the pulse of the times beats with feverish celerity ; theories, opinions, tastes, alter far more rapidly than of yore ; we grow old sooner than we used to do. It may, indeed, be plausibly objected that since the word of God is the same for all times and all circumstances, the flight of years tells less upon the minister's office than any other ; but in point of fact he who is no longer up to the age, and who is no longer understood by or in sympathy with the present generation, can no longer exert a due influence. But it is impossible to lay down any general rule as to the proper age for retiring from active service. Both mentally and physically some men grow old much sooner than others. There are young pastors quite incapable of the amount of exertion that their seniors get through without much fatigue. Men of a melancholy temperament and a bad digestion are the most easily worn out. The superintendent and the Synod have, it is true, a voice in the matter, but they too often consider it a want of brotherly love and of proper respect for old age to speak out, and so they encourage the aged pastor in his delusion, and never consider the unfortunate congregation. Then family ties further complicate the case ; the wife and children are unwilling to part with any portion of the income. And so one year glides away after the other, and the man loses the energy requisite to take a decided step. I have heard that a distinguished minister of state

once asked his dismissal from his late Majesty, who on his part requested him to retain office ; but in a few weeks the statesman reiterated his request, adding, ' As yet I have my strength of will and clearness of intellect unimpaired, but whether in a year's time I shall be capable of the decision requisite to resign is very doubtful, and therefore I request to be allowed to retire at once.' And accordingly the king released his faithful servant.

As a general rule, it may be said that a young minister is the most popular, at all events, when he preaches the gospel in the first freshness of his love and faith, and he will prove the most successful in rousing a congregation. The old minister is more inclined to lead them on quietly and judiciously, and to build them up in the faith they have. But he has his bounds which he should not pass, and we must pray God to preserve each of us from overstepping the limit of incompetence. I should entreat the superintendent or some trustworthy neighbour to warn me in time, and should (I hope) consider his doing so a proof of real affection. Official jubilees often make a melancholy impression enough, and the order of merit bearing the number 50 is not alone a preacher of repentance, but also a warning voice that in many cases comes too late. No doubt the decisive step is rendered easier to take by the pension-fund for retired ministers. But it makes an unpleasant impression when the retiring minister

suddenly rates his income more highly than heretofore, so as to insure a larger compensation. Neither should the assistant have cause to complain of the amount of the retiring pension. But I am writing recollections of the past, and not peeps into the future.

Finally, it is given to a living faith to take note of times and seasons, and to discern God's dealings; and so we must hope and pray, through Divine grace, to hear and understand his call whenever he sees it fit to give his servants a period of repose, that they may prepare for their great journey to their Father's house.

#### PATRONS.

To pastors in the country, or in small towns, few things are more difficult than to take a right view of their relation to their patron, and therefore I will here give certain recollections and experiences of my own bearing upon this subject, in the hope of benefiting my younger brethren. Not that there are any universal rules to be laid down in the case. Much must depend upon whether the patron lives upon his estate, and manages it himself, or whether he takes a part in the Government, lives in town, and only brings his family to the country in summer; whether he has let his property, or keeps a bailiff there; whether he is an educated or uneducated man;

whether he has inherited the land from his ancestors, or recently purchased it on speculation ; whether he is a moral and church-going, or a notoriously irreligious character ; whether he merely looks upon his property as a source of personal revenue, or recognises his obligations towards his tenantry ; whether he looks upon them as mere instruments to be used for his own profit, or as immortal beings for whom the Lord has shed his blood, and remembers that he will have to give an account of the souls of the household over which he is head. In one country village that I knew, there lived a rich old gentleman who had spent his youth at court, and adopted all the views and ideas of Voltaire. He very seldom made his appearance in church—not more than two or three times in the year—and then he used to take the newspaper there with him. Moreover, he repeatedly announced that he only came to set a good example to the common people. He often expressed his pity for me, condemned as I was to preach things that no rational man continued to believe. His great age and my youth made it easy for me to bear much that would otherwise have been very trying, added to which, I had an innate respect for all ‘powers that be,’ as ‘ordained of God.’ Because the patron misuses his position, the pastor is not to overlook the duties of his. A bad king is king still, and an ungodly patron is still the patron of the parish, and, as such, must be treated respectfully. It is worse than useless



to dispute with such men as these : bad feeling is roused, and arguments thrown away. Two things are essential to a fair controversy. There must be some common ground of truth on which the disputants can meet, if only the belief in the existence of a God, and the immortal soul of man ; and also there must be a certain equality in station. Where neither the one nor the other of these conditions is found, disputations can only lead to estrangement or positive separation. These sceptical gentlemen generally give themselves out as very tolerant ; and one must hold them to that, and insist upon the right they concede of private judgment, though generally at the risk of being considered ignorant and narrow-minded. Ridicule and a challenging tone must be passed over, as if unperceived, or else met with humility, and, if possible, with pertinent replies well seasoned with salt. The influence of such a man with the flock at large is fortunately but small. Thirty or forty years ago, poor and uneducated people took it for granted that the rich, the noble, and the educated, all lived without prayer, the Bible, or church ordinances ; and the power of a bad example to do harm is often exaggerated, as well as that of a good example to improve.

In another parish lived a very eccentric man, who had been an officer in his earlier days, and still retained his military title. It was rumoured that his mind had been affected by a disappointment in love ; since then



he had lived in strict retirement, and especially avoided all intercourse with womankind. His old and faithful man-servant had contracted many of his peculiarities, and spoke in the same style as his master, who never used a personal pronoun, but always vaguely spoke of *one* doing this or that. This strange pair came regularly to church, and attended every burial and every marriage. The bells were never allowed to ring without this gentleman being previously informed, and then he would invariably make his appearance in high boots and full military costume. His beneficence and love for the poor knew no bounds; and, consequently, he was always surrounded with beggars. They would cluster round his door singing hymns, or follow him about when he walked in his beautiful woods. He would often desire that the small surplus that remained in the church chest should be given to the poor, because, as he expressed it, 'The poor are the nearest *agnati* of the Church.' The first New-year's day that I spent in that parish, I was informed that my predecessor had always been in the habit of paying a visit to the patron, and wishing him a happy New-year. Accordingly, I wended my way to his house. When I had been announced, he himself opened his room door; but as soon as he saw me in my cloak, he said, 'When one comes to congratulate one's patron, one might expect that one should appear in one's canonicals;' and he closed the door in my face. In the afternoon, I returned

in full canonicals, and I was graciously received. I was much struck by the very deep and clear understanding this gentleman possessed of the way of salvation, confused as his mind was on other subjects. When the Berlin Hymn-book was first recommended to the churches, the other villages about declined it, on account of the expense; but our patron rose in church, and announced to the congregation, ‘If the hymn-book be a good one, one will give the money to get a copy for each person; but one must examine it first.’ Accordingly, I gave him the book with some little anxiety; for I would gladly have kept to our old Porst. The following Sunday, after the sermon was over, his servant threw open the door of the family pew, and the officer walked up to the altar in his stately way, and said, ‘One must not be too easily led away in these matters. One has examined the hymn-book, and found much that is good therein; but the devil’s name is never mentioned, and one is of opinion that, where the devil is wanting, the Lord Jesus will not be found to be fully and clearly apprehended. One will, therefore, not give the money, and one will continue to sing Porst.’

Whenever anything was said in the sermon that pleased him, or did not please him, he would take up his position before the altar, and, after having given his opinion in a few pregnant words, conclude invariably by saying, ‘One has said this as patron of the church and parish.’ The church, by the way,

had fallen sadly out of repair, and looked wretched enough. I once applied to him to restore it ; but he replied, ' When one wants to see something beautiful, one can go into the woods ; but one goes to church to hear the word of God. One will not alter the church.' Whatever he gave to the poor, he chose to give with his own hand ; and if application was made to him to relieve this or that individual, he would always reply, ' One may send the people here, and one will give.' When his end came, he received the holy Communion, having previously made his confession : ' One has been a great sinner ; but, through the blood of Jesus, one is going to the Father.' His end was perfect peace. At his funeral there was a great crowd of beggars ; and when the coffin was placed in the vault, one of them cried aloud, ' We have had a great loss !' All wept bitterly, and no wonder ; for certainly their loss was great.

We often hear pastors, who have to deal with irreligious and self-righteous patrons, express the wish to be connected with a patron worthy of the name ; one who would set a good example to the parish in church-going, Bible-reading, and Sabbath observance, etc. But even such a position as this has difficulties of its own. In a district with which I was acquainted there lived a landed proprietor who was universally recognised as a pious man, and was most zealous in the cause of missions and Bible societies.

His family and household were universally respected. Now, in the parish there were, no doubt, a few really converted people ; but the profession made by the majority, when one came to look into it, was a mere external thing, without practical influence upon their character ; and yet they were perfectly self-satisfied, and the parish had got the name of a very religious one. For to please the patron, as well as to get something from him, they diligently attended church, and sang, and prayed in their own houses ; but a sincere repentance and amendment of life they did not look upon as essential. Generally speaking, in such parishes the people are wont to be exclusively devoted to the patron, especially if he be good-humoured and liberal. Now, so long as the pastor remains on thoroughly good terms with this gentleman and his family, he may indeed get some reflected influence ; but if in any one respect he differ, he loses his hold on his flock. And generally the patron or his wife expects the pastor to lead some individual or other, with whose conduct they are dissatisfied, into a new way of life ; and if he fail in this, they are very apt to find fault with him for want of zeal or want of tact ; and the greater the general agreement between pastor and patron, the more striking the slightest discrepancy. Of all parishes, the hardest to manage is a self-righteous and outwardly religious one. The people have long been accustomed to the sound of the gospel, since for a

number of years the patron's choice of pastor and schoolmaster has been carefully made; and the 'little flock,' when it finds too much support and deference, is apt to grow spiritually sick, because those who are not really in earnest add themselves to its ranks. In my opinion, there is but one remedy, and that is, a strict maintenance of discipline. The patron, the church authorities, and the pastor must be of one mind as to the way of treating particular cases; must diligently consult and pray together, and whenever a brother falls into any sin, they must take the course prescribed by the Lord in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew. But it may so happen that the patron is averse to discipline; will have everything effected by love; and the poor pastor, on his side, cannot convert these professors. And yet I would guard against its being supposed that good patrons are not blessings to pray and thank God for. I only warn those connected with them not to overlook the special difficulties that may arise even in such a fortunate case.

Another circumstance that very much impedes the activity of the faithful minister, is the patron's estate being let, or occupied by an agent. These men are often very jealous of their authority, and if not openly hostile, usually quite indifferent to the Church, and they set an example of an irreligious and careless life. Now, if the pastor be on too friendly terms with them, his ministerial character suffers, whereas if he avoid them,

and openly express his disapprobation, they may raise many difficulties in his way ; for the steward or agent has great influence upon the material prosperity of the parish, can oppress and injure individuals, and if the poor observe or imagine that by speaking slightly of the Church, or rejecting its ordinances, they rather recommend themselves to favour than otherwise, this will tell upon their conduct. The old Adam, to whom the Cross is a stumbling-stone and foolishness, flourishes apace under this worldly sanction. Sins of unchastity, especially, are very mildly treated and invariably increase ; all so-called innocent amusements, such as dancing and drinking in public houses being encouraged, while little interest is taken in the school, and working on Sundays is readily allowed. The poor pastor is stamped as an accuser and denunciator who afflicts the working classes with his mistaken severity, grudges the young every kind of pleasure, and has no pity upon the needy who would gladly earn a trifle on a Sunday if they could. An irreligious agent can, by means of very commonplace wit indeed, make a pastor ludicrous ; and if once the people fall into the habit of laughing at the individual pastor, they soon lose their respect for the Church. Swearing is a sin that has fallen into general disuse, but agents of an inferior stamp are still addicted to it, from a miserable delusion that it gives them a certain degree of consequence. Nothing more inflating than a half-and-half position and ‘a little brief autho-



rity,' and when the two are united, a man's vanity may really reach the bounds of utter folly. An agent is indeed seldom to be called even half a gentleman, and a sub-official of whatsoever kind is no very imposing personage ; but as both these have to convey the orders of the real authorities to the common people, they are fond of playing the part of the great man, and as they suspect that their inferiors have at bottom no profound respect for them, they bluster and scatter oaths and curses round. I have often been pained to hear shepherd boys, when driving their flocks to the field, swear fearfully at them or at their dog. Upon one occasion I remember preaching upon the third commandment, and showing that the curse only falls on him who utters it, not on the servant or the dog who is cursed, but inevitably upon him who curses them, since the Lord God has solemnly declared that he will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain. 'God,' I said, 'must punish the swearer, for his word is true, and his purpose cannot fail. A sensible, rational man cannot by any possibility swear and curse, and must needs consider those who do so fools, since they, weak and miserable men, thus defy the omnipotent God.' On the Monday after this sermon, a shepherd lad told me that he, for his part, had resolved to leave off swearing, but that the bailiff had that morning, as he called up the drovers, addressed his prayers to the Devil as usual.



As a general principle, I may advise the pastor never, under any circumstances, to seek for anything whatsoever from patron, bailiff, or agent, beyond what is unmistakably his by right, and even to be cautious in accepting little friendly services from any of them. If once the pastor appears at the Hall, and it be said, 'What else can he be wanting now?' all is over! A barrel of water, a bundle of straw, and trifles of that kind, are indeed given with apparent willingness, but secretly they are rated highly. Even if the pastor pays full price for whatever he is supplied with,—milk, butter, corn, etc.,—still it gives occasion for chattering and for misunderstandings, and he will do better if he supply himself from other sources. Even the customary offerings—those things that belong to him in virtue of his position—are too frequently causes of disagreement. The agent will often stand up unfairly for the interest of his master, and say that the worst is good enough for the pastor, and what is really the latter's due will be made over as a gift. If, however, he complain to the master of the agent's conduct, he will, generally speaking, make bad worse. These are trifles, but trifles that embitter life a good deal, especially if the pastor's wife get discontented, and pour her complaints continually into her husband's ears.

Another excellent rule for a minister is caution in his social intercourse. To be on intimate terms with the landed gentry or the agent is only desirable when

these are religious people. Otherwise he is in great danger, and if he seeks to win over these men by a friendly demeanour, by adopting their tone, playing cards with them, and so forth, he will be the one who is conquered, he will not conquer them. Out of familiar friendships come often the keenest enmities. The pastor must not be a follower of the world, must not keep house like the agent, the bailiff, etc., must not, therefore, accept from them hospitalities which he cannot return. He must, indeed, when invited, attend weddings and christenings, but he must know when to come away. Again, nothing can be more unwise than to make social distinctions. If the rich farmer's daughter marries, and the pastor goes with his wife to the wedding ; he must do the same when the poor shepherd or labourer invites him, and drink his simple cup of coffee, with his two or three guests. It is not for the sake of good eating that an invitation should be accepted, but on account of the respect it shows to the ecclesiastical position ; and if the pastor no longer wears his gown, it should be plainly seen that he has only just taken it off. There must be grace said at table ; and the presence of the pastor, while it does not scare away cheerfulness, must be a restraint upon all kinds of excess.

Above all, there must be no difference in the minister before and after dinner. In former times, the office itself had far more weight than it has now, and the respect felt for the profession could bear and

overlook what now hopelessly offends. People pay far closer attention to what the pastor says and does, than he himself imagines, and one false step may cause an amount of mischief that sermon upon sermon all fail to remedy. To hit the happy medium is not, indeed, given to all ; but each must pray to be kept straight. A pastor who thinks that foolish talking and jesting, which is not convenient, will make him popular, is grievously mistaken, and he is only undermining his own position. Again, when amongst educated people, he must never hear holy subjects treated with levity without bearing witness. As a general principle, whenever this is done in his presence, he may assume either that he is not in his proper place, or that he has already given the company a handle for putting him thus to the test.

I was once at a party where, after dinner, there was a good deal of light talk on the subject of hell, and a military man of high rank gave it as his opinion, that hell was an invention of the priests to keep ignorant people in order by fear, but that a rational man would love and follow virtue for its own sake ; also, that Scripture itself does not terrify us with this ugly doctrine, but teaches that all goodness must proceed from love. I sat by, and knew not at first whether to speak or be silent, but as some who were then looking at me had been in church that very morning—it was the first Sunday after Trinity—I stood up and gave out the text of the day : ‘There

was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day ; and there was a certain beggar,' etc. In my agitation, I laid perhaps a greater emphasis upon the words *hell* and *in torment* than was necessary, and then, while all were silent, I took up my hat and went away. This incident led to no coolness between me and the family.

On another occasion, however, I remember receiving myself a most impressive lesson and rebuke. The bailiff was keeping his birthday on the Sunday, and, after service was over in the chapel-of-ease, he invited me to dinner. After dinner, cards were played, and I, who was waiting for my carriage, was standing at the window, looking out for it. At that moment the bailiff was summoned away, and requested me to hold his hand for a moment. As I knew the game in my college days, I took up his cards, but gave them back as soon as he returned. When I left he accompanied me to the house-door, and said, ' You have unwittingly done me a great injury to-day, for when I was called off, N—— of W—— was by, and he was anxious to get a situation under me, which pleased me much, for he is a worthy man. But when he saw you take up the hand at cards he drew back, and said it had been chiefly on account of the church and preaching that he had been anxious to move, but that if he were only to change into a parish where the pastor played cards, he might as

well remain where he was.' This said N—— had been in the habit of coming from some distance to my church every Sunday, but after this, he went over to the Old Lutherans, and then to America. This incident distressed me a good deal, and for some time was much talked of, and injured me not a little in the estimation of pious people. And, however few the number of these may be in a congregation, the pastor must see that he do nothing to offend them. A patron, who was looking out for an incumbent, having had his attention called to a certain minister, made a considerable journey to the village where the latter lived, and went on Saturday evening into the public-house. Those who were there assembled were easily led to give their opinion of the pastor, but not satisfied with this, after church on Sunday the patron asked the landlord whether there were not a few pious people in the village who were in the habit of praying much, and constantly attending divine service. The landlord named one or two of this stamp. The patron forthwith went to see them, and after this interview, offered the living in his gift to the pastor. My belief is, that he went the right way to work.

Pastors not unfrequently give rise to unpleasant feelings on the part of the congregation,—more especially the patron, the agent, and other leading men,—by a decided abuse of their pulpits. In small parishes, nothing gives so much offence as personal allusions and innuendoes in the minister's sermon. Men would

much rather hear the truth plainly and even roughly spoken than be subjected to innuendoes. Therefore the pastor must be very cautious, and if the text or a natural association of ideas should suggest anything that might be thought glaringly applicable to this or that member of his flock, he must repress it. It is not enough that the pastor avoid all mention of names ; this he is legally bound to do ; but every one knows very well who is meant, especially with regard to cases that have come before the consistory, and with which, therefore, not only the church authorities but their wives must be conversant. It is much better to remonstrate with the offending party alone ; but, of course, this requires more courage than to make covert allusions from the pulpit, where no man can contradict them. I remember having for some time a certain grievance upon my mind against a rich and influential man, but whenever I saw him I had not courage to mention it, for fear of giving him offence ; and, besides, his wife and children kept coming in and out, and we were seldom alone. After long putting off, I at length wrote to him, and requested some private conversation. He instantly replied to my note, and appointed a day and hour. Now, then, the ice was broken. I went. We sat together on the sofa, discussed the weather and the harvest, till at last he asked me what I specially wanted to say. Upon which, I just said it out, and added, if it were true, it was not right before God.



This man neither denied the charge nor attempted to defend himself ; he explained to me how the thing had come about ; and my fear of giving offence proved perfectly ungrounded. Finally, he gave up the sinful practice, and ever afterwards treated me with confidence and affection.

I may here remark that the respectable rustic is much more sensitive than is often supposed ; he sets a high value upon character ; and if the pastor in his sermons *talk at him* in a way that diverts others, he is highly offended. The preacher in a town need not be half as cautious ; he may indulge far more freely in generalization ; but in the village, every one is so intimately acquainted with his neighbour's sayings and doings, that any personal allusion is at once understood and applied. If one wishes to rebuke a sin committed in the village, and common to the majority of its inhabitants, one must speak out plainly, and not lay one's-self open to the suspicion of dealing in intentional *innuendoes*. It often, indeed, happens that people think the pastor is preaching at their special case, when, in point of fact, he knows nothing at all about it. In one of my districts lived a labourer's family, which passed for very respectable, and every now and then came to church. One Sunday, man and wife sat together, and I remarked at the close of the service that both seemed very much agitated. In the afternoon, the husband came to me in great excitement, and complained that I had held him up



to the whole congregation, but that, since the thing was known, he would set it to rights. I, indeed, had been perfectly in the dark; but it now came out that this person had forsaken his lawful wife in Mecklenburg eighteen years before, and lived with the woman to whom I had supposed him married. They had a large family, who had all been registered as legitimate, and several of whom had been confirmed as such. Neither he nor the woman in question were to be persuaded that I had not been aware of this fact. They were soon afterwards quietly married. Indeed, it often happened that people thought I knew of certain dishonest acts of theirs, and gave them to understand as much in my sermon. Some brought me the stolen articles to induce me not to point them out, and were very thankful to escape that disgrace. I must say, however, that these were generally young people. I remember a girl bringing me a handkerchief late at night, and a lad a pair of wooden shoes, that they had stolen. This application of the preached word to the individual conscience is the work of the Holy Spirit alone; and, therefore, one must never go into the pulpit without imploring his aid, for without prayer, the word remains cold and ineffectual. Although I have been discountenancing personal allusions from the pulpit, I do not mean that the preacher should confine himself to mere generalities; rather he must seek to bring the word home to the conscience, must apply it to daily do-

mestic life, point out in a special and definite manner the curse and wretchedness of sin, and the nature and power of repentance ; so that if any one should be asking himself in secret, 'What shall I do then?' he may have a clear and practical answer returned to the important question.

#### DAY-LABOURERS.

The regulations made of late years as to the tenure of land, have exercised a most marked influence over the social condition of many country parishes. The large farmers, who were formerly the very mainstay of the community, are either materially diminished in number, or have died out entirely. In one village, for instance, there will be no farmers at all ; in another, where in former years one could number eight of this class, there is only one left now, and the same in a third village, which used to have six. Before these new arrangements, the farmers were still bound to render certain services to the landlord, to carry manure, to help in harvest, etc. Since the change made in their condition, and the diminution in their numbers, of course the number of labourers has been greatly increased ; and there are now several estates upon which you only find the lord of the manor and the day-labouring class. In other districts, the farmers have removed from the village, and live apart

on their own fields, far from church and school. This isolation of theirs has weakened the sense of fellowship between them and the rest of the neighbourhood ; nay, it has even raised an antagonism between the two parties ; and it has much estranged the former from the church. It is, indeed, undeniable that, in a politico-economical point of view, the liberation of the land from feudal obligations has had advantageous results. The farmers make more at the present time out of half their land, than they did formerly out of the whole ; and the gentry who have bought the property of the farmer, and annexed it to their own estate, are able to farm it more scientifically, and thus greatly to raise its value. But our general social condition has not gained. Since farmers have been able to mortgage, divide, and sell their freeholds, many old families among them have become impoverished, and have sunk to the condition of day-labourers. If there is a large family, it generally becomes impossible for the eldest son to hold the much-incumbered property, and the whole family lose their old central-point and place of refuge. On the royal domains, indeed, affairs have taken a different course ; the farmers have often grown rich, and rejoice in the name of landed proprietor, despising that of farmer, and no longer working as did their fathers, but employing day-labourers. Besides which, the increase of the potato and turnip crops, and other produce of the kind, has necessarily led to

a much-increased demand for labour on all large properties.

Now, it is a universal complaint amongst the clergy that the families of these day-labourers are becoming more and more estranged from the church, and are, with great difficulty, induced to send their children to school. The fact is, that from Monday morning till Saturday night both man and wife are hard at work, and the only time they have for themselves is on the Sunday. It is the day when the husband must plant and hoe his own potatoes, make any little repairs his home may want, and examine into the condition of his wooden-soled shoes and those of his children. The wife, on her part, has enough to do, to wash, mend, and darn the clothes worn during the past week. To which we may add, that in harvest, and at all busy times, the gentry are very willing to encourage Sunday labour, so that, naturally enough, the idea springs up, 'We labourers cannot possibly go to church.' And when once the habit is fairly broken through, even when winter comes, and they might find time, there is no longer any inclination for church-going. The constant change of stewards and agents tends more and more to relax all ties of personal attachment, all other ties, indeed, than those of mere interest on either side, and the old reciprocity of filial confidence and fatherly supervision are utterly gone. The best efforts of individual benevolence on the part of the landed proprietors effect but little, for the class

of day-labourers sinks more and more into a stupid sensuality and a mistrust of their superiors. Poor people who have to work hard throughout the week, and to spend the Sunday in domestic care and worry, lose at length all sense of affinity to another world, and the outcome of the system is a creature very like other beasts of burden, both as to his labour, and his feeding, resting, and enjoying. The wide-spread complaints we hear of drunkenness, robbery, and immorality, are certainly far from being ungrounded; nay, things have come to such a pass, that labouring men hardly seem aware of these being sins. They are still, however, somewhat amenable to the fear of man, and man only, and therefore they do screen some offences from view when they can. But, for the most part, the clergy are perfectly powerless, and have hardly any energy or spirit to go on labouring amongst this class. It has become one of the rarest things possible to meet with a labourer who conscientiously attends church and cares for his soul. We pastors often lay the fault of this on the proprietors or their representatives, and accuse them of directly or indirectly keeping the people away from church; and this tends to the mutual estrangement of clergy and landed gentry. In large towns, a race has been quietly allowed to spring up which boldly proclaims that there is no God and no immortality; that has cast off all fear of hell, and scoffs at eternal punishment. If things go on as they are doing now, we

shall soon see the same state of things in the country. This race is one our fathers have not known, for though the poor have been always with us, the Proletariat is a product of mammon-worship, the full development of which is still recent.

Here it is that democracy seeks out its raw recruits, who will mount the barricade and face the cannon, while their loud-tongued leaders shelter themselves from personal danger; here it is that a cowardly socialism finds a too ready ear; here are the masses it would organize for a last war between rich and poor, which war, if ever it come to pass, will not realize the dreams of the *literati*, but will tend to the disruption of every social tie. On the ruins of existing institutions gallows would rise for the rich, and mere bestial enjoyment run its brief career, to be succeeded by destitution and despair. In heathendom there were broad distinctions between freemen and slaves. Christianity would have all men alike free, but it is a miserable error to let unchristianized masses have it their own way in Christendom. They only whom the Son of God sets free can bear liberty.

In the class of day-labourers and mechanics, there often springs up a feeling of envy and hatred to the rich, which only needs an exciting cause to lead to open revolt. Liberty without the fear of God is, indeed, the very reign of Satan upon the earth. The day-labouring class in great measure springs from that of domestics. The man-servant marries the



maid, and becomes a day-labourer. But even between master and servant there is too often a latent enmity, and interest is the only strength of the temporary bond between them. The principle of the master is to get as much work as he can for as small wages. That of the servants, to get as large wages as possible for as little work. All the legal regulations recently made are merely a sad sign of the deterioration of the nature of the tie, and do but little to improve it. Law only produces dispute and recrimination. That the master of the household ought to be not only a king but a priest in his family, is a truth often entirely forgotten; and that honour is, for the Lord's sake, to be given to those to whom, from their position, honour is due, is a doctrine that has hardly now-a-days left a trace behind. Both master and servant are accustomed to give warning for the merest trifle. Complaints about servants are very common, and constantly supply our housewives with conversation; but one who is in the confidence of servants hears terrible charges preferred against masters also. A household without love, without patience, taken up with earthly cares, covetousness, labour without prayer, can never be the abode of peace; over-severity and cunning will always be waging war there, let the external profession be ever so evangelical. Any one who has seen the amount of fresh hiring that goes on in one of our villages at Michaelmas, may well feel sad at heart. A man without any home-feeling, any



love for the place where he has worked, enjoyed, suffered, is more to be pitied than the superficial observer might suppose.

In our days, we often hear expressions which imply that a monarchy cannot possibly be maintained on the unstable foundation of an equalized population. The throne requires for its support a powerful and influential nobility; and kings who, to increase their own immediate power, restrict and enfeeble the nobles, really undermine their throne. This is agreeable even to the Napoleonic ideas, and hence an aristocracy, founded on wealth or office, has been created where no other was to be had. A democratic professor remarked, in the course of one of his lectures, that the nobles were essential spokes in the wheel of monarchy. Oddly expressed though the idea be, it is quite true; and we would further observe that, just as the king cannot dispense with the nobles, the nobles cannot spare the freeholder. No doubt the recent changes have estranged the classes, but the noble digs his own grave when he looks upon the plebeian freeholder as an enemy, and tries to suppress him. On the whole, we have still in our province a good deal of respect and deference felt for our nobility, though lately much has been done to decrease it. This the democrats know well, and, therefore, they do all they can to excite the farmer against the noble. It is a cheering fact that our present Legislature should not only seek to uphold the rights of the

throne, but to do all in its power to preserve and encourage the farming class. And it would also be a worthy object of their activity to take up the condition of the day-labourer and mechanic with all their energy, for it is an urgent question, and one in which they are deeply concerned. I am not going, however, to make any suggestions, for I am only occupied with the duties of the clergy. The two methods hitherto adopted for protection against the Proletariat, are a great increase in the numbers of the police, and a poor-rate. The first measure is plainly a sad necessity and a disgrace to Christianity; and the latter assumes more and more the character of a tax levied by the poor upon the rich. Through defective management, idleness is often encouraged, and the saddest cases left unrelieved; and, above all, the system in no way promotes what we may call class-conciliation. Unless the charitable hand that gives, and the grateful hand that receives, come into contact, there is no blessing in giving or taking.

We may often hear it maintained positively, and not wholly without reason, that in order to remedy existing evils effectually, the condition of the day-labourer and mechanic must be fundamentally altered; but then, we ask, how is this to be brought about? We wait in vain for a practical answer. Mere legislative enactments in such a case could, at the best, do no more than they have done in the matter of Sabbath observance. There can be given *no law*

which can give life. One thing is certain : the minister must wait for none, but must do what he can to attack the foe who has his very stronghold in these social difficulties.

As for rationalism, with its motives of expediency and moderate worldliness, it may do for a while for educated classes, may help them to maintain an outward respectability ; but for the day-labourer, such a middle course is impossible ; and when he breaks with the Christian faith, the Bible, and the Church, the breach is a thorough one. In the higher ranks, unbelief may be kept within the bounds of morality by public opinion and other considerations ; but when the devil appears in the Proletariat, takes possession of the labourer or the mechanic, all barriers are broken down ; there is nothing left but the dread of the prison and house of correction.

For my own part, I have been obliged to pay particular attention to this labouring class, as they chiefly made up my flock. My first step was to become personally acquainted with them. I passed through the school into the family. But how difficult it was to get at the parents, who were hard at work all day, while on the Sunday I had to preach three times, and felt myself entitled to a little rest during the intervals. What particularly repelled me was their brutality in word and deed. The behaviour of married people to each other is quite different in rich and poor. Hard work and anxious care make men rough,

sulky, and irritable. I thought the poor children treated too coldly and harshly. Then the diet and the untidiness ; the unbearable atmosphere of the lower rooms, in which the beds took up almost all the space, for in most of them there were two families ; the filth before and behind the house ; the misery, drunkenness, immodesty, bad language, and the like, often made my duty a very trying one. But whenever I heard of any one being ill, I always went off at once, for the care of the sick was often left to little children. A doctor, indeed, could be got at the expense of the landlord, but the difficulty was to get his prescriptions attended to. Visits of this nature could not be short. One had to sit quietly and patiently by the bedside, not to shrink from lending a hand whenever one could afford the patient any relief, and to see that something was provided which he could safely eat. Mere praying and reading is not all ; nay, it is often not to be attempted. Generally speaking, one finds the gentry, or the village officials, ready to come to the rescue in all urgent cases ; and the minister must not neglect his privilege of interceding for the poor and the sick. If the Lord allows him an opportunity of doing kindness to one, it is not lost upon the rest ; and any care shown to a sick child, who would else have been neglected, is sure to meet with special gratitude. In short, one must pray God for a loving and patient spirit in dealing with these people, and not hold them

cheaper than the rich and cultivated. Once when I was preparing my sermon, wondering who would be in church, and asking myself what I particularly had to say, I saw the day-labourers pass by, and stopped to look after each. My Bible lay open on my table, I was then going through it, and had come to the 6th chapter of Exodus : 'And Moses spake so with the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.' It is wonderful what an impression God's word makes upon the soul when it gives clear and distinct utterance to what had been already vaguely passing there. I must confess that from that hour I have had a very tender and indulgent feeling towards the hardworked poor, and when I find that all my seeking and striving has been in vain, I think of the want of success of Moses from the same cause, and am reduced to silence, for what am I compared to him? In winter evenings I used to go pretty often to visit some of these families. One man had seven children, who had come in rapid succession ; he was hard-working, and well spoken of. His children were all asleep when I went in, and as I expressed the pleasure the sight of their peaceful little faces gave me, the father said, 'Ay, these are fine times for them ; they need not to take any thought for themselves.' On the Sunday the man was in church. I dwelt much upon the happy state of children, exempt from care as they were, and went on to say that believers were the

children of God, that the Lord had commanded them to be careful for nothing, and promised that he would care for them. The man understood me, and it evidently pleased him to hear his expression repeated from the pulpit. Another day I saw a thresher come out of his barn, his little children ran to meet him; he took one in his arms, gave his hand to another, while a third clung to his coat. I addressed him, and congratulated him upon his children. He replied, 'I must make much of them, poor things, since I am their father.' On Sunday, when I described the man with the three children, all were very attentive, and listened with pleasure while I went on to say that every evening the Lord God looked round for his children, and rejoiced when they clung to him, but that he had too many children who would not even wish him good-night, and quite forgot how willing he was to receive them.

One year that the price of wheat had risen considerably, and that the farm-servants, to whom a certain percentage is always given at its sale, had got more money than usual, I began to persuade them to put by a little of it, and offered to keep their savings myself, a thing that had to be made a profound mystery of, for they are very suspicious, and feared that their masters might grudge them such an overplus. This measure proved a very successful one. Each man who on the Saturday night brought me a portion of his wages, received a book with an account

of it, so that he could at any time know exactly how he stood. This book was kept carefully hidden, and the fact of its owner and I having a secret understanding between us, tended to establish a friendly feeling. I remember that once on a New Year's day I had above 700 thalers in my hands, intrusted to me by day labourers, carters, and shepherds who are generally more accessible than the others. They were very greatly delighted with the few extra gro-schen they received as interest. At first, all my efforts were directed towards cultivating in them a sense of order and cleanliness, and my next endeavour was to lead them to see the blessing of domestic peace and mutual forbearance. But gradually I won several so far over that they began, out of respect to me, to come to church whenever they could. I freely grant that in this saving process lay a temptation to covetousness ; but, on the whole, the advantages far preponderated. The consciousness of having a little fund of their own in case of emergencies, gave the men a different position, encouraged the taste for order and honesty ; I have also invariably remarked that the possession of property, however small, has a favourable influence upon domestic life. Husband and wife have a secret between them ; have some other common topic than anxiety and distress. And then it tends to make the women cleaner and more thrifty in their housekeeping. Some of the men were a good deal impressed when I proved to



them that the groschen they daily spent in brandy came to more than twelve thalers in the year, and that for that sum many useful articles may be purchased, while the brandy consumed not money only, but much beside ; as, for instance, peace and concord at home, and the good opinion of their superiors. The most difficult cases to deal with amongst this class, were those of the men who had got into arrears with their employers. On an estate that I knew, corn, salt herrings, and even money, were always advanced to the labourers, who had to *work out* their liabilities. If they wished at any time to leave, they were restrained by the fear of having a heavy bill brought against them, or else the master into whose service they wished to enter was obliged to buy them off, and so, though called free labourers, they were virtually slaves.

The years that I spent in this parish were the most laborious years of my life. Often I was ready to despair, and utterly weary, not of my work, but of working in vain ; and yet not so, for a few did awake out of merely earthly cares to care for their souls. Much has been gained where there is one labourer's family in a district which regularly attends church ; one can point to it as an instance of the practicability of the thing. But far more is gained where there is one member of the flock who by his life bears witness to the truth. Gradually the number of religious families amongst us rose to ten But my happiness in

them was but short-lived. During the summer they were required to work on Sunday ; this, without any persuasion on my part, they declined to do ; the consequence was they had warning given them, and at Michaelmas they were obliged to leave. That was a heavy blow to me, and as had often happened before, I had to begin anew. I may here observe that on all occasions where a pastor is professionally present, as at christenings, burials, etc., he should deal very tenderly and circumspectly, and use the opportunity to gain the hearts of the people. One poor lad whom I had confirmed, and who had had serious impressions, fell sick. I very often went to see him ; his end came, and his father and mother, who lived on very bad terms, stood beside him. The dying boy looked at them with his dim eyes, reached out his hands to each, and then joined their hands together. I was deeply touched, and, kneeling down, prayed for peace in life and death, and during my prayer the boy died. The impression made upon the parents was very great, and a blessing followed it.

Nothing is more difficult, according to my experience, than to conquer the tendency to steal. Day-labourers are allowed to keep pigs, geese, and even goats ; but the food of these creatures is generally stolen by the wife and children. This is the first step ; and it leads on and on, till all sense of the boundary-line between *meum* and *tuum* grows very obscure indeed. There is hardly any sin that so de-

grades a man as theft, and it is particularly ruinous to children. Once in visiting a certain school, I found there a boy without shoes and stockings,—as indeed was the case with many, and, moreover, singularly tattered and torn, as well as uncouth-looking. The master had placed him in the highest seat ; and when I asked him why he had done so, replied aloud, so that all the children could hear what he said, ‘ This is a stranger, so we must pay him particular honour, and besides, when he came to-day, the word of the Lord Jesus occurred to my mind, “ He that receiveth one of these little ones, receiveth me,” and so I gave him the best seat.’ And while he was speaking, he went on stroking and caressing the child in a way which must have been quite a new thing to him. This teacher was said to be so popular with children, that they ran away from home to come to his school. I accordingly thought, here is a man from whom much may be learned. Afterwards I heard him say that this boy was a sad thief ; but he added, in a confident tone, ‘ I shall bring him round, if only I can get hold of him, for I feel a strong affection for him in my heart ;’ and so indeed it was. Later I confirmed that boy, and had much satisfaction from him. He who has love in his heart has plenty of courage as well, and is sure of a blessing. It is to me a wonderful thing to notice some pastors looking quietly on while landlord and farmers are robbed, and only evincing any sensibility when their own orchards

suffer. In such a case, if the minister be discreet, he will suffer silently, and take it as a punishment due. The respectability of a parish is a pastor's respectability ; its disgrace is his. It is always a bad sign when he loudly complains of misconduct among members of his flock, and parades their shortcomings unnecessarily, or even with a certain satisfaction, as if they accounted for and excused his own want of success. He may indeed privately lament over these matters to an intimate friend, or lay them before God in secret prayer ; but if he holds up his people to obloquy, he must be content to share it. Even in the pulpit a censorious tone is not permissible. The minister must content himself with anxiously beseeching his hearers to remember the things that make for their peace. He who gives out people worse than they are, will never get them to be better. No servant and no child was ever yet improved by scolding, still less a congregation.

A pastor who has a good deal of intercourse with school children, and closely observes the character of people, will soon find out who in the village are thieves ; and it is his part to seek to convince each individual of his transgression, and to convert him therefrom. It is impossible to lay too much stress upon the Eighth Commandment in talking to the children, or indeed to make it too often the subject of one's discourse. Theft is perhaps, in itself, no more sinful than other breaches of the Commandments, but it deadens the conscience, and degrades

the character more than any other ; to which I may add, that it is a sin that is peculiarly hereditary. We may almost confidently assume that where the parents were dishonest, the children will prove so too. Even drunkenness does not run in families to such an extent. I once had a very smart young girl in my confirmation class who came of a thieving stock, and I am sure the child sincerely strove against her natural tendency. For a time she was successful, but at length she fell, and then she went on till she got into prison like the rest of her race. The higher orders, who so readily and carelessly break the Fourth Commandment, themselves diminish, by so doing, the stringency of God's Word upon the general conscience, and afford to others a precedent for not taking the Eighth Commandment either in a literal sense. The habit of arguing that the Fourth Commandment belonged to the Ceremonial Law, and is no longer to limit personal liberty, cannot pervade a people without undermining the authority of the other commandments as well. If there are large parties at the hall on Sunday, and the servants are kept hard at work, or if, instead of attending church, the family drive about the neighbourhood, they cannot wonder that the reverence due to their position should decline. A pastor, who was very fond of card-playing once brought up a labourer before the magistrate for having hoed his potatoes during the hours of divine service, and the man was fined. Meanwhile the

pastor sat and played at *ombre* with the agent and the bailiff. The labourer, on his part, begged to know whether it was lawful to play at cards on Sunday, and finally declared that he would not pay his fine unless the pastor did the same, or proved out of the Bible that you might play cards on Sunday,—an act he considered far less useful and justifiable than potato-hoeing. Indeed it is a great hardship for the poor man to be forbidden to work on Sunday, while the rich may amuse themselves in a way that amounts to a breach of observance of it. Again, the poor may not do what is useful, but public-houses and dancing-rooms are thrown open to him more widely than on any other day. Such things embitter the poor ; the logic of them is too subtle for their comprehension. If the pastor drives off to the hall to spend the Sunday afternoon, and meet the whole neighbourhood there, he should hold his peace if the poor man spends the same time in hoeing his potatoes. My own experience convinces me that little good is done by bringing these matters under the notice of the authorities. There is no more infallible way of winning the respect and regard of the working classes, than having a genuine fear of God in one's own heart. A young steward, who came of a pious family, was in the habit, whenever he heard the church bell ring, of taking off his cap, and holding it a while before his face ; he never swore, never stormed, and the people took pleasure in noticing this, and grew really fond

of him. A labourer's wife once told me, with much thankfulness, that while she was a farm-servant, her mistress not only kept her to her work, but often took her aside, and affectionately admonished her to walk honestly and chastely in God's sight. The pastor must address his advice and entreaties to the heads of families, and implore them to deal faithfully with the strangers that are in their house, and make it as much as possible a home to them. To be loved is an imperative need of the human heart, and he who supplies it shall not lose his reward. The poor lad and the poor girl who have to serve for their bread, are children of poor parents, who have fed and clothed them by the sweat of their brow, and we should remember that they claim our sympathy, that they are not to be treated as mere working machines for whom their just wages are enough, but they must find something like parental feeling in our hearts. If the community at large learns the forgotten lesson of honouring those in authority, according to the divine command, the day-labourers will not be behind the rest. The steps that lead onward to this goal are sometimes hard to take, but we must not grow faint and weary. True we have all wandered and strayed far in this particular, and therefore our repentance must be deep and thorough ; and if we cannot accomplish much at once, we must be contented with little.

Above all, let no pastor expect any improvement to be brought about by merely laying down general



rules. The Lord requires *faithfulness* from his servants, and his promises belong to such as are faithful, and to no others.

Another way of becoming acquainted with day-labourers, and an easier one than to visit them individually, is to establish an evening service, especially in the winter. In my first parish evening services were unheard-of things, and I much regret that for some time I neglected to hold one, partly because I had not courage for such an innovation, and partly because I had reason to suppose that the superintendent would raise an outcry against it. I might indeed have had prayer-meetings in my house; but as it was, I was reputed to be a Pietist, and looked upon with suspicion in many quarters. I knew that the police always kept an eye upon members of the conventicle; and that a minister should take part with such, or have them in his house, was a thing unheard of in the district. Now my natural timidity disinclined me for introducing novelties; and again I was deficient in those spiritual experiences which seemed to me, from my slight knowledge of such prayer-meetings, to be essential to holding them. I will relate a circumstance which had favourable results, and might indeed have set me on the right track—only new ideas are difficult to seize, and still more difficult to carry out. On the last evening of the old year I was walking up and down before my own door, and, according to a long-established custom, men, women,

and children were assembling to spend the evening in the public-house, which was near the parsonage, and also, strange to say, actually under the same roof as the school-room and the sacristan's dwelling. The sacristan, who was also at his door, called out 'good evening' to me. I went up to him, and he began to complain of the wretched night that this, the last of the year, always proved to him, the uproar being such that he had not a chance of sleeping. I pondered what could be done to remedy the evil; then, struck by a sudden idea, exclaimed, 'We will put an end to it: open the church, and at once begin to ring the bell.' The sacristan was a little nervous at the notion, but he however complied, and I took measures for the speedy lighting up of the building. As soon as the bell was heard, the people came pouring out of the public-house and their own homes with the inquiry, 'Where is the fire?' for they believed it to be an alarum. However, it soon got circulated,—and the lighted church confirmed it,—that service was about to be held. I put on my gown in haste; but the sacristan came to tell me that the patron, who lived close by, was much displeased, had found great fault, and wanted to speak to me. I went at once and tried to conciliate him, but in vain, and he threatened me with all manner of evil consequences. Meanwhile the church had rapidly filled. I gave out the first line of a familiar hymn, and the voices swelled so loud that they reached the patron's house, and his

wife and all the servants came. I addressed the congregation from the altar upon the subject of Simeon's departing in peace, and asked whether the old year was to close with all its sins and without repentance. The effect was evidently good ; only two returned to the public-house, the others all went home, and attended church the next day. Since that time the year has been closed in this manner not only in my parish but in many of the villages around ; but I did not proceed to establish regular evening services, and I believe I lost much in consequence. Now, however, such services, as well as Bible and prayer meetings, are widely extended, if only they were invariably held in the proper way !

#### THE PARSONAGE.

In the centre of the village stands the church, with its steeple, surrounded by the churchyard ; and near the churchyard wall, on one side, you will see the parsonage ; on the other, the school. Such is the long-established order. The village consist of two long rows of dwellings ; the farm-house recedes a little ; it is entered through a court-yard, and faces its barns and stables, so that the farmer can overlook his affairs from the window. A high hedge fences off this court-yard from the street. In many old farm-houses, the stable is under the same roof as the house, for fine horses are the farmer's glory, and in olden times they were especially cared for. . .

The street widens out where the church stands, so that it is a conspicuous object to all who enter the village. Generally the churchyard is higher than the street, so that the walls are externally very high, internally not so. Over the way stands the manor-house, surrounded by more extensive and complete farm-buildings than the farmer's dwelling. But the church, with its steeple, is the highest edifice in the village ; and the great lime or elm tree beside it, is as old as itself, and has all sorts of legends and histories connected with it.

This order of things has sprung up quite spontaneously, and yet when one comes to consider it, what a deep significance it has. The kingdom of God is the centre of life ; the church may well, therefore, occupy the centre of the village. In the dwellings round are care and toil ; too often sorrow and sickness ; in the church there is only peace and rest. In those cottages we find strangers and pilgrims, but their Father's house is not far from their door ; and on Sundays the poor children gather there, and their Father speaks kindly to them, comforts and admonishes them not to lose their way in the desert, but to bethink them of their home. All day long the steeple stands pointing above, that men may not get absorbed in their earthly occupations, and forget their high destiny. The clock reminds all of the flight of time, and cries, 'Remember thy latter end ; it is high time to awake out of sleep !' The vane, blown hither and thither by the wind, tells of the changes

and chances of this mortal life. The cock on its summit crows aloud when sin weighs on the conscience, and the tempter draws near. The bells ring out three times a day to call the labouring to prayer, and the old fold their hands, and hear a voice that proclaims, 'Eleven has struck ; it will soon be time to rest.' A village without a church and steeple seems incomplete indeed.

Of late, people have left off burying in the churchyard, and have placed the cemetery outside the village. This may be necessary in a few cases, but it has not so pleasing an effect. It is not well to pass at once from the street into the church. The high-arched gateway leading into the churchyard opens only to admit a funeral train ; the little door near it serves for the living. It is an impressive and touching thought that the dead lie around the church, and that, when the grave has closed over their kindred, the mourners go at once into the house of the Lord, not only to learn lessons of resignation, but to be reminded that the Lord is risen indeed, and that our sorrow is not like the sorrow of those who have no hope. He who goes to church passes the graves of his loved ones, and his feet tread upon the dust of his forefathers. All this tends to open his heart to God's word. At the chapel-of-ease in my district, the people used to sit about on the graves, and wait there till the pastor came. It was edifying to see the silent or quietly-conversing congregation patiently

assembled there. The bells call loudly 'Come, for all things are ready!' The village is filled anew, and every one, dressed in Sunday attire, passes through the little door, and over the graves, into the house of God. Garlands and wreaths are hung up inside it, memorials of those who sleep without, and they preach of Him who has overcome death. In the evening, indeed, when it grows dark, people in general are not very fond of passing through the churchyard alone, for they know that the slumbering dead do not like to be disturbed; but the pastor and the sacristan have no such fear, for they are the servants of Him to whom darkness and light are both alike. In the evening, too, the birds fly to the steeple, and they build their nests in the interstices of its stones. The stork delights to pace the long roof of the church, and looks proudly down upon human stir and bustle. It is said, that when he first comes, bringing us the spring, he always flies round the steeple before he visits his nest; and when the crows circle round and round it, every child knows that the morrow will be stormy. Then the inscriptions on the crosses, and the shields on the tombs, are of special interest to all. Those who hold high positions in the village have a railing round their grave, and buy an iron cross; but the majority are content to leave theirs to the skill of the village carpenter, who also executes the inscription that they have chosen; some simple Bible text, or a beautiful verse of an old hymn. The



nobles have their vaults, in which, through the grating, you can see the row of handsome coffins. But such is the nature of the inscriptions in some churchyards, that it would be well if the Consistory would interfere to prevent the desecration of the resting-place, by rationalistic or merely sentimental epitaphs. The farmer learns to believe that he is an educated man, if only he has similar new-fangled nonsense carved upon his family tomb!

Next to the church comes, as we have said, the parsonage. The study-window looks out upon the churchyard; and if the pastor wants to see the steeple near, he must raise his head and eyes higher than other people need; the bell that summons to prayer has, too, a louder voice for him than for the rest of the inhabitants, and the graves speak in deeper tones to his ear. The parsonage garden runs along the churchyard wall, and a door opens out of it to the bench under the old lime-tree, from which one can overlook both sides of the village. Each one who passes up and down the street has an undying soul, and of each one the pastor must give account, as to whether he has sought, urged, and allured as a good shepherd should. On that bench, under the lime-tree, how much silent intercession must, indeed, be poured out! Nor is this intercession all. The Lord said unto Moses, 'Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak to the people, that they go forward.'

Outwardly, the parsonage is a house like others;



but whenever the devil goes about the village, seeking his prey, and planning where best he can spread his net, he goes about the parsonage thrice, and looks into every window ; and most of all, he rejoices if the door of that house be open to him, and he can not only make his way in accidentally, but rule there, and even hold his ground in the study, without being annoyed by prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. Watching and praying are the only bolts this thief fears. A parsonage is a house of prayer or a very den of iniquity. There is no peace, indeed, for any of the ungodly ; but a minister who lives without aspiration and endeavour is the poorest and most miserable man in the whole village. Poets are fond of describing the parsonage as the very abode of peace. Ideals are fair, but they are not often realized. Be this as it may, the farmer and the day-labourer always enter the parsonage with a certain degree of respect, and in their best coat ; and they expect, besides matters of business, to hear some word in season, some speech seasoned with the salt no disciple should ever lack. The parsonage should set its seal on the sermon ; it should be the practical commentary on the gospel. But, alas ! too often we have a hero in the pulpit, strong to admonish and console others, but in his own house the while a mere coward. In the church, indeed, he can show others how to do great things ; but he himself will not shoulder the burden or wield the sword. These

things the flock are quick to discern. Some infer that all that they hear from the pulpit is not to be literally understood, and others think of the proverb, 'Do as I say, not as I do.' In short, the parsonage is the most public place in the whole village; no other house is half so much talked about. Just as people are proud of a handsome steeple or a good set of bells, they are proud of boasting of their pastor; that he is a powerful preacher, or a learned man: or that he is afraid of no one, but knows how to hold a tight hand, especially over the young. I remember hearing it told of an old minister, who was sincerely beloved and honoured, that whenever he went through the village on Sunday evenings, he always carried a riding-whip in his pocket, and that once he had whipped the bailiff's eldest son, who had been impertinent to his mother, till the lad was glad to get off by repeating the fourth commandment on his knees before him.

The true founder of the parsonage was Luther, and therefore the fundamental principle that stirred Luther's soul, brought about the Reformation, and restored to the pastor liberty to take to himself a wife, must hold sway and have its manifestation there. This great principle is that of justification by faith. This justification presupposes repentance, is laid hold of by believing, and proved by sanctification. In short, repentance, faith, and holiness are the three pillars that uphold the roof beneath which

the peace of God abides. A foolish man builds his house upon the sand, a wise man upon the rock. God's word is that rock, and the effect of that word is to awaken men to repentance, to constrain them to believe, and to enable them to be holy. *Repentance* is the fruitful mother of domestic virtues : it insures patience towards men, because it craves patience from God ; it makes us tolerant, because it reveals the sins of our own heart ; it makes us cautious, because it teaches the difficulty of self-conquest ; it makes us humble, because it shows us the beam in our own eye, while before we only saw the mote in our brother's. *Faith* helps us to bear the trials and distresses of life, because, being consciously the children of God, we cannot let our spirits be absorbed by trifles ; it makes us joyful, because possessing the grace of God ; placable and kindly, because forgiven, and glad beholders of the Lord's reconciled countenance. *Sanctification* is the guardian of the home ; it urges us to follow after increased peace ; makes us careful to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of love, the greatest of all the Christian virtues. Peace will not abide in any human dwelling, because it is well built, well furnished, and plenteously stored. Misery may be as intense in a palace as in a cottage, and the children of God as happy in a cottage as they would be in a palace. The cold wind of self-righteousness, the frost of vanity and worldliness, and the unrest and disunion of evil

tempers, are not to be banished by any amount of external splendour. Repentance, faith, and holiness are the fairest of all adornments, and the angels of God hover round lovingly wherever these are, and sing their heavenly song of 'Peace on earth.'

Nevertheless, no man, and consequently no minister, has ever been promised perfect happiness on earth. All true Christians must still be cross-bearers. 'He that will be my disciple, let him take up his cross,' saith the Lord, 'and follow after me.' The whole of Scripture proves that God's children never yet were without tribulation here below. It is through much tribulation, indeed, that we enter His kingdom : they who do not share in it are bastards, not children ; and the chastising of the Lord is no proof of his wrath, but his love. What would the minister become if he led a life of mere comfort in a home where the cross, with all its various shapes and hues, had no place ? His heart would grow dull and dead as stagnant water ; his preaching would be barren and empty ; his prayers would lack all unction and intensity. As it is, whenever the rest of the house is shaken, when the wind blows, or the waters rise, or the thunder-rain falls, the pastor must have his closet where he can be alone with God and his cross ; some place apart which is only entered by those who wish to speak to him on spiritual themes. This room, in an especial sense, is the parsonage. Let the minister's wife arrange all the

rest of the house according to her own taste ; the study must have nothing to do with domestic business or social visiting. *Oratio, tentatio, meditatio faciunt theologum* : that is the answer as to all inquiries of how the pastor spends his time in his study. The *oratio* has a wide sphere, and includes every want, every desire of the whole congregation ; and the *tentatio* applies to the whole world of the heart, and to all life's experiences, varied as these are ; therefore the *meditatio* should not be limited to mere fragments of the sacred book, chosen as detached texts for sermons. 'The *oratio* and *tentatio* are dependent upon the *meditatio* ; and the latter is dead and unfruitful without them. This *meditatio* must not be confounded with a cursory reading of the Bible, or even with exegetical study, though I would here remark, that the improvement in the tone of our exegetical works is a favourable sign of the times. Genuine meditation must be learned from the Virgin Mary, of whom we are told that she 'kept these sayings in her heart.' The writings of Lange, Starke, and Bengel all bear the impress of much meditation, and it is this that makes them so valuable. Day by day the pastor must absorb himself in the divine word ; and this not merely by fits and starts : it must be the result of real effort, and employ no small portion of his time. One hears many sermons which display logical and acute exegesis indeed, but have evidently not sprung from

any serious meditation. Friday and Saturday may be set aside for *studying* the sermon ; but meditation should pervade the week. It is not possible to lay down positive rules for the employment of the pastor's time ; but, whatever happens, he must leave himself enough for meditation. If he takes to amusing himself with light literature in his study, or devotes himself to the care of his garden and land, he will rapidly deteriorate. But yet he may actively follow some favourite course of study or science ; and, above all, he must keep himself up to the occurrences of the day. The walks to the school, and indeed any solitary walk, will generally prove friendly to meditation. And we would recommend the pastor to go often alone into the empty church, and seat himself where this or that member of his congregation is accustomed to sit, and silently contemplate the pulpit and the altar, and listen to what the funeral wreaths upon the walls have to say. Although the people at large have given up the right of going at any time into the open church, the pastor must not forget that it is written of it, ' My eyes and my heart shall be on it continually.' An empty church, especially if it be an old one, is a very instructive place. I knew a nobleman who built a mausoleum close to the church, had it made light and cheerful, and a comfortable chair carried into it ; and there he often went to sit alone, with the coffins of his forefathers, and feed his soul with thoughts of home.



But the prevalent spirit in the parsonage will, in point of fact, depend, secretly indeed but mainly, upon what manner of spirit the pastor's wife is of. The Reformation, as we have said, restored to the parish priest the right of leading a married life. This the Catholic Church altogether prohibited, this the Evangelical Church permits, though she does not enjoin it; but be that as it may, it has come to this, that you can hardly imagine a country parsonage without a mistress. Indeed, students and candidates often think of marrying before they have a prospect of a cure. Much has been written and spoken against these premature engagements, but I too well know that it has been in vain. Those whom we would warn do not hear or read the counsel, and if they did, they would not act upon it, for man is seldom made wise by the experience of others. It is, however, a lamentable thing enough an engagement of years to an unplaced candidate, the poor bride-elect grows old and spirit-broken; her betrothed resorts to many and many a humiliating expedient on the chance of obtaining a living, and his disappointed hopes embitter him against patrons and authorities, and too often against the providence of God. In fact, these engagements have become themes for general ridicule. There are candidates who have had to wait six, seven, ten years, nay, I knew one who had been engaged five-and-twenty years. At last he got a cure. For years the betrothed pair had not met. Each had



grown white-headed, and marvelled at the change time had made in the other. It often happens that these imprudent engagements have to be given up, and then come heart-wounds, hard to heal and apt to break out again. Sensible parents cannot indeed prevent their daughters from falling in love, but they will not give their consent to a formal engagement unless there is some prospect of a marriage. A candidate who falls into a habit of love-making, and contracts one attachment after another, is not fit to have any house of his own, least of all a parsonage, and patrons should be slow to appoint him even if the engaged lady herself comes forward to plead the cause.

I am well aware that good advice as to the selection of a wife is generally a useless thing, only appreciated by those acknowledge its wisdom too late. We must take life as it is, not as it might and ought to be. There are ministers' wives who are the ornament of their home, and the helpmeet of their husbands; there are others who hang like a black cloud over the house, and choke out all peace and joy. Under all circumstances, the pastor has his study, and woe be to him if he give up that last stronghold. There are ministers' wives, thank God, who are meek and pious, but there are quarrelsome, gossiping, covetous, and inquisitive ones as well. Nor can a pastor give his wife a new heart; no man may redeem his brother, or make an agreement with God for him.

I have no intention of painting an ideal parsonage, such as is rarely if ever found. I only intend to lay down a few conditions that are universally essential.

A parsonage must in no case be without family prayer and grace before meat, nor must any practice be allowed there which gives offence to pious people, as for instance card-playing, or dancing, or dinner-parties, or worldly entertainments of any kind. As to the manner of conducting family worship, that must necessarily vary ; if no one can lead a hymn it cannot be helped, but if the pastor's wife be musical, it is decidedly better. There should be prayer, reading, and singing, and the whole should occupy from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour. The minister's wife, on whom lies the burden of the family, is the best judge of the best time for family worship, and it is her part to remind her household and her children, and gather them together without inconvenience or constraint. If family prayer has been established from the first setting up house, there will be no difficulty about it. But if it be begun later, it will meet with more obstacles than might be supposed, especially if the mistress of the household do not look upon it as a sacred duty, but a merely optional matter. In the latter case, sick children or babies, or the work the servants are engaged in, or some excuse or other, will always be pleaded for giving it up just this once, and if *once* family worship fall through, the rule broken is not easily restored. Yet if the pastor can-

not manage his own household, how shall he control the congregation? That rationalistic pastors, learned and refined disciples of Schleiermacher, should go on without family prayer is intelligible enough, but that a minister should exhort his flock to perform a duty he himself neglects, does, I own, surprise me. If it be urged that each individual can pray for himself, it is the same line of argument as that which justifies giving up church-going, because God can be worshipped at home. Doubtless he *can* be, but whether he *is* so is exceedingly doubtful.

In the course of my first year of office in my second cure I once preached on the subject of family prayer, and after the sermon an old man, who had a habit of calling everybody *thou*, came up to me, and said, 'Thou art quite right; so long as there is no family prayer and no saying grace, no good is done; thou must repeat thy sermon till folk begin.' I took his advice, and adducing it as a reason for so unwonted a step, I preached that sermon five times with but few alterations, and after that the old man came again and said, 'Now thou mayest leave it off; five families have begun.' The families that assemble for worship at home are always the most regular in their attendance at church. Each head of a house who wishes to be king must also be priest there, else the alternative will be mere ruling by fear or utter disorder and insubordination, and the one is as bad as the other. Again, the pastor must on no ac-

count scold and bluster, nor should he allow his wife to do so ; but there lies a wonderful power in mutual prayer, and if the servants see that their master and mistress honour the Lord, they will honour them, and all will go well ; whereas without family prayer the parsonage will inevitably go to spiritual rack and ruin.

The education of their children is another point to which the minister and his wife must pay especial attention. It is a miserable thing that the pastor's sons should be the wildest and most unmanageable in the whole village, and his daughters dressy, proud, and frivolous. God's word requires that all children should be obedient to their parents, the pastor's children should especially be so. He is not responsible for their conversion or faith, but he certainly is for their obedience. That is a very morbid pietism which insists upon certain religious formulas being employed by children ; too often they rest content with this mere semblance of piety, and this gives rise to all manner of evil. We are apt to speak contemptuously of boarding-schools in which young ladies are taught deportment—*broken in*, like young sporting dogs, to special airs and graces ; but this sort of *breaking in* in religion leads only to hypocrisy, which is far worse than a worldly tone. True education implies the leading away from sin and to Christ, and the best culture is that which tends to restore the divine image lost. In this sense a servant may be highly educated and cultivated, and education which does not keep this aim

in view results in self-love or bondage to human opinion. When John the Baptist said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' he expressed the fundamental principle of education. The parental influence will gradually decrease; but it must be the Lord, not the flesh, not the unrenewed nature, that increases. The only rational education is that by which the fear and love of God are fostered in the hearts of children, and the goal aimed at must be their conviction that when their father's eye is not upon them God's eye is, and that where their father's hand cannot protect them the Lord is near. Mere secular education will always have most inadequate results, for knowledge puffeth up, and affords no shield against temptation, no resistance to natural defects. Above all things, the prayers of the parent must follow and sustain the child.

While the children are still young they naturally learn reading and Bible history from their mother, who devotes to them the time that domestic affairs leave free. Later, their father will take up their education in so far as his professional duties, which must remain paramount, allow him; and if he be a country pastor he will find plenty of unoccupied time, if only he know how to make the most of the same. But let him remember that it requires far more patience to teach one's own children than those of strangers, because it is a trial to one's vanity to have them turn out dull and incapable. We must not forget the apostle's warning, 'Fathers, provoke not your chil-

dren to wrath, lest they be discouraged.' If circumstances permit, it will be desirable to send the boys to a public school, but I consider it a very hazardous thing to trust one's girls to the boarding school, where they will be brought up fashionably, and will perhaps learn to look down upon their mothers, and to despise all domestic avocations. Many a sweet girl has come back utterly spoiled by her town education, to find herself the victim of *ennui* in the quiet parsonage, and to offend the village people by her cold demeanour and fine-lady airs. At all events it is a dangerous measure, and many a pastor has bitterly regretted it. A young girl brought up in the country, and in the retirement of a pious home, is like a flower, still pearled with morning dew. But under the forcing-glass of the boarding school these fresh dew-drops are dried up, and the delicate early bloom rubbed away. Not many days since I found, in some old diaries of mine, a rather long essay that I wrote on the education of daughters, when God gave me my first little girl, and I re-read it with considerable interest because the system advocated was the one I subsequently pursued. But the Lord soon took the child, by whose cradle I then wrote, to his own school. The little thing had not the slightest fear of death; nay, she was as delighted with the idea of dying as children are with the prospect of travelling, and seeing new and beautiful things. A short time before the end, after a severe attack of cramp, she



said, in a clear voice, 'Father, am I dead now?' and when I replied, 'Not yet, my darling;' she went on, 'I see bright angels, with wings, dressed in white with red sashes!' and the next moment she was gone. This child had a peculiar love for our servant-man; and as I moved to the window after all was over (it was then four o'clock in the morning), the man came running out of the stable in his shirt, and asked me, in an agitated manner, whether Anna was dead? When I told him that she was, he wept bitterly, and declared positively that she had just stroked his cheeks with her cold hand and kissed him, as she was wont to do, and nothing could ever persuade him that this had not really happened. At the present time I often seem to see that child standing waiting at heaven's gate, in white raiment, wearing a little crown, and lovelier far than when she was on earth. It is a beautiful thing to have one or more children already with the Lord. When we bury a child we must seek to bury some portion of our natural man in the same grave, and then we shall be the more easily comforted.

This subject of education is closely connected with another of great importance, the training of our servants. There are two facts which should never be forgotten in a Christian household, least of all in the parsonage. First, that children and servants are subject to the bondage of original sin; and secondly, that, in virtue of holy baptism, they are the children of God.



The first thought begets the patience needed to bear with weaknesses and offences, and from the second springs the deep reverence with which we must regard the very least of those whom God has accepted, and the care to avoid offending one of them, since the Lord is the avenger of all such, and will not suffer anything done to his little ones to remain unrewarded, whether it be good or bad, but will reckon with it as done unto himself. He who wraps himself in his self-righteousness and never thinks of his own sins, is easily induced to be impatient and severe; he who does not see the beam in his own eye, sees the motes in his brother's as large as beams. Above all, we must be careful never to impute bad feelings and unworthy motives to children or servants; this is sure to injure their moral tone. He who is always treated like a thief, always looked at suspiciously, becomes a thief at length. Again, we must cautiously avoid laying down general rules for servants or children. To enforce or forbid anything *once for all* is easily said and done, but it works very ill, and when once the phrase, 'I have told you that ten times,' comes into use, patience is over, and the temper gets soured. We must lay down as few rules as possible, and leave a wide scope to free action and individual sense of responsibility. Our great coadjutor must be the force of habit, while we deal singly with every single fault, we must always deal in the same way; the same result must always succeed the same course of

action, and when once children and servants find out this inevitable sequence, they will learn to avoid the first link in the chain. A judicious mistress must praise far more than she blames, must commend the thing that is once well done, far more than she censures what happens once in a way to be done ill. Laying down many rules is a course prolific of offences and unkind feeling : *there is no law given that can give life*. The pastor must never forget that he is a disciple of **H**im who bore the sins of the whole world, and then his own forbearance will not fail. I hold it to be a wrong thing for him to send his servants away ; let him take every precaution before he engage them, but when once that is done, the tie should not be lightly broken. It is to the credit of the parsonage that the man-servant and maid-servant should remain there till they can set up a house of their own. Respectable people should have reason to look upon service at the parsonage as an honourable distinction for their children, and these on their part should feel that they have a character to sustain.

The pastor must constantly remember that he is not only a householder and a father, but a shepherd of the flock, and that he belongs to that whole flock, and is responsible to it. First comes the sacred calling, then family ties. A really good minister's wife must clearly understand that her husband does not belong to her exclusively, but that he was wedded to the

parish before he was wedded to her. Consequently, she must beware of intruding into his professional secrets and anxieties. She must open no letter that is addressed to her husband ; nay, she must not wish to read every letter that he receives. She has nothing to do with the conversations that go on in the study. It is most undesirable that the parsonage should be the centre of village gossip. The congregation must have reason to believe their pastor a truly reticent man, who will not readily discuss seeming indifferent matters that concern his people even with the sacristan, when driving together to the chapel-of ease, or meeting in the churchyard of an evening. The minister's wife must keep household annoyances as much as possible out of her husband's sight, instead of irritating him by her complaints ; but, on the other hand, she must not be painfully anxious as to his over-working himself, nor must she pamper his appetite too much. The old Adam within us bears nothing worse than over-cherishing. This renders the body indolent and torpid ; the more we give in to it, the more exacting it becomes. The body is a servant which must be strenuously kept up to its work. He who wears himself out in his sacred calling is not to be pitied ; the Lord will provide for the widow and the children of one faithful unto death. As for the pastor's wife, it is well that she should occupy herself in the loving care of the sick and aged, that she should know how to make some good nourishing broth for lying-in women, but

she must not preach, nor trench upon her husband's province, nor dream of instructing him. She must not forget that she too is but a member of the flock.

The internal arrangements of the household must be simple and neat, yet not so excessively neat as to make the farmer scrupulous about treading on the carpets, nor to occasion much anxiety in the lady of the house as to the state of the farmer's feet. It is very improper that the people who come to see the minister should have to take off their shoes before they enter the study. Neither is it a popular thing for the minister to have a bell at his door, and to ring up his servants as fashionable people do. A very worthy and faithful girl who moved with us from one parsonage to the other, saw the bell-rope on the wall, and asked what its purpose was. When she was told that in future she would not be called as before, but that the bell would summon her when wanted, she shook her head, and said peremptorily : 'I shall not allow myself to be rung for.' Neither should the pastor's servant wear livery. Nor again should the outfit of his bride be a gay one, even if her parents' means allow it. Later on in life, when expenses have increased, and the vestiges of bridal splendour are surrounded by the purchases of more needy days, the contrast is not unlikely to awaken discontent and longing for the better circumstances of yore ; and besides, it gives the house an incongruous and ruinous appearance.

The question as to whether the pastor ought himself to farm the glebe-lands or not, is one that has been often mooted and answered in various ways. In the time of its prosperity, the *Darmstadt Ecclesiastical Gazette* devoted many articles to this subject, and little as I valued the paper in general, I know that I read them with interest, for I had to decide whether I should undertake the management of my own glebe, or continue to let it as my predecessor had done. There can be no doubt that those who originally endowed the different cures considered it advisable that the minister should farm his land. They invariably made his revenues dependent upon its produce, and we always find stables and barn connected with the parsonage. But we must not overlook the fact, that agriculture has of late years assumed a new and far more complicated and expensive aspect, and that, where there is but a small capital to go upon, it is very difficult to farm profitably. The unlucky idea of encumbering the glebe with rent charges has partly nullified the great object of endowment, and occasioned widely spread discontent. There is no better means of securing the future existence of any institution than to endow it with land, all other property being far more variable in value ; but it is a hard case that the pastor should receive half or a quarter of the true value of his land, while the bulk of it goes to his rich patron. However, the question we have now to deal with is this : Shall the

pastor let his glebe-lands as they now exist, or shall he undertake the farming of them ?

One minister looks upon it as beneath his dignity to trouble himself with live stock and crops ; he will not lead the life of a farmer, not he. Another dreads the care and anxiety that wait upon agricultural pursuits, and the irritation produced by idle, wrong-headed, and pilfering labourers. But nevertheless, experience soon teaches them that it is difficult to lead the same sort of life in the country as the town. Having to send to some distance for butcher's meat, milk, and other articles of daily consumption, adds to their expense ; ready money is often wanting, and should an unexpected visitor make his appearance, the mistress of the house does not know where to turn for a late dinner. Then again, there is no getting a man to crop the garden at the exact time he is wanted ; the one maid cannot get through the work of the house, and not a charwoman is to be had to help in the wash. Perhaps, indeed, the Sunday drive to the chapel-of-ease may be a stipulated privilege, or one of the farmers may let out a vehicle for a consideration, as the distance is not great, and the horses would otherwise be idle ; but if an excursion be necessary in the course of the week to make purchases in the neighbouring town, or to pay some visit already too long postponed, and the minister's wife is unable to walk, or the weather is bad and the roads dirty, what is to be done ? He sends all round the village in vain ;



this parishioner cannot, the other will not, hire out his horses. Sometimes there is the utmost difficulty in getting a load of water from the pond for the great wash, or a load of sand for the garden; and the poor pastor groans beneath a dependence, for which he has to pay dearly in money or thanks. Even when his tenant is bound to render this kind of service, he often does so grumblingly enough if he chances to be disturbed at his own field-work, or to consider it quite unnecessary that a pastor should drive out visiting. In his despair, the latter resolves upon keeping horses himself; but he finds this an expensive luxury. The oats are the least part of it. Hay and straw are scarcely to be had at any price. The man-servant must have board and wages, and, worst of all, he has not enough to do: falls into bad ways, makes love to the maid, etc. etc. Consequently, land has to be rented to employ man and horses, but the necessary implements require an outlay: there is no capital; money must be borrowed; the farming is carried on in a penurious spirit, and does not answer; neither the pastor nor his wife understands it; they grow suspicious and down-hearted; and after many expenses and many anxious hours, the farm is given up, the stock sold at a much reduced price, and the proceeds will not meet the debts which remain, as the only result of the experiment! All this occasions no small talk in the parish, and the pastor loses in the general estimation.



Or say that the pastor, upon entering his cure, takes at once the management of the glebe-lands upon himself, his prospects are often no brighter. If he enter at Michaelmas, he must lose a whole year; if at Easter, he must be out of pocket for six months; for the glebe-land tenure runs from Michaelmas to Michaelmas, and the receipts fall due at Michaelmas and Martinmas. Then how few candidates have any ready money, whereas most have some college debts. They have, accordingly, to borrow to get through the first year, and ten to one the harvest, when it comes round, does not answer their expectations. A cow or a horse dies; there must be another loan. Debts increase, and care with them. Economy is pushed to the utmost, but the farm swallows up everything, and brings in no return. The ministry requires all a man's energy and self-possession; but the pastor is worn out by his farm, so, in despair, he throws the whole concern overboard, and may bless God if he gets out of it without any decrease of conjugal affection. Domestic peace is best maintained when unshadowed by financial anxiety. This is the great advantage the wealthy classes have over the poor. Embarrassment is the worst enemy of the home virtues and home affections.

And even more propitious circumstances have their dangers. The old pastor with whom I spent two years as assistant, farmed his own land with considerable success; but yet he once said to me, 'Farming

has sunk and deteriorated my character, till I have looked upon my cure as a secondary thing !' Indeed, the danger of stooping to littlenesses, fixing one's heart upon one's crops, and becoming a mere farmer, is far greater than may be supposed. I advise every young pastor to beware of farming, and to put up with a tenant at a fair rental. Another reason for my advice is, that farming increases the difficulty of giving one's children a good education. The mother has no time to devote to her daughters ; the boys are sure to become passionately fond of the horses, to spend much time in the stables with the men, hence they become boorish in mind and manners, take a dislike to their books, resolve to be bailiffs, and idly dream of the bliss of landed proprietors.

But if, notwithstanding all objections, the pastor is bent upon farming, let him at least see that he does so under favourable circumstances. He must have means of his own, so as to begin free from debt. He must carefully examine his constitutional fitness for the task. No man, who is by nature anxious and desponding, should venture to farm if he has any hope of success, or of leading a happy life, or any desire to be free from earthly-mindedness. Again, no one should farm who has a fashionable wife, given to nervous symptoms, fond of late hours, preferring light reading to domestic avocations, having literary pretensions, or pretensions of any kind. Neither

must he farm if he has a wife who quarrels with her servants, who is hard to please, or of a greedy and sordid disposition. Finally, his glebe must not be at a great distance from the village, else all the time will be wasted in mere coming and going.

And now, assuming that all circumstances whatsoever, personal, pecuniary, and local, are favourable, how is the farm to be managed? I will briefly relate my own experience, premising that I should be very sorry to mislead any by my comparative success. First it is essential to have some knowledge to begin with, gained from a careful study of practical works, and some fixed system to go upon. Then the amount of land under cultivation must neither be too great nor too small. Twenty acres, for instance, is too little; it will only support two horses and a labourer, and one has all one's trouble for nothing. The keep of one horse is an expensive thing. If the land is good, wheat-growing land, from forty to sixty acres will suffice; if not of first-rate quality eighty acres may be undertaken, because they will be more easily cultivated. Such a farm as this must be so managed as to give sufficient, but by no means excessive, work to two horses, a labourer, and a dairy-maid; and for this purpose it should be divided into about eight sections, and a careful rotation of crops observed: as for instance—1. Potatoes; 2. Spring wheat; 3. Clover; 4. Autumn wheat; 5. Pease; 6. Autumn wheat; 7. Green crops; 8. Wheat. Thus half the land is

always under corn, and half under green crops. This system insures the manuring of three portions, 1, 5, and 7. The ground must be most thoroughly and carefully dug for potatoes, the succeeding crops will require only two ploughings. This rotation will give abundant food for two horses and four or five cows ; and when the clover and potatoes are got in, from forty to fifty sheep may be fattened during the winter, and will be found profitable in more ways than one. The cows must always be kept in the cow-house, and if they have a liberal allowance of oil-cake, together with clover, potatoes, and turnips, and are well looked after, they should yield about 3000 quarts of milk a head. He who feeds his cows penuriously has penurious returns, and a homœopathic system of nourishment is always met by a homœopathic measure of milk. They must never be allowed to graze, first, because there is not space enough for it, and also to avoid the hire and keep of a cow-herd. The sheep must be bought at Martinmas and sold again in April after being shorn.

The great point of all, however, is to meet with a farm-servant who has intelligence and circumspection to understand the system as a whole, and the sense to see what makes for his own advantage. I gave my farm-servant twice as high wages as the groom at the hall received, besides a house rent free for his wife and children, and a garden ; added to which, of every dollar that the farm brought in he had two

groschen, and the thirteenth bushel of all the corn sold. If he had been twelve times to the town with a cart-load of produce of any kind, the thirteenth load was his own. He had also a percentage upon every pig and sheep sold, unless, indeed, he preferred to take the thirteenth sheep. On the other hand, whenever a day-labourer was wanted, he paid a third of the wages, as well as half the carpenter's, saddler's, and smith's bill, so that it was his interest to take good care of my property. This man found his place a very profitable one, and was able to lay by yearly. To me it was the greatest possible advantage to have very little to do with the farm ; his interest was so bound up with mine that for his own sake he was little likely to be wanting in honesty or activity. It was not necessary that I should lock up barns and granaries, for I knew he was thoroughly to be trusted. Indeed, the more unlimited the confidence reposed, the more freedom and responsibility conceded, the more a servant of this stamp prides himself upon fulfilling his duty, for he gets full credit for it. The arrangement was a little complicated just at first, but afterwards it worked admirably, and the returns of the farm far exceeded my expectations. When I first began, the farmers about used to shake their heads at my system ; but they soon took a friendly interest in it. Indeed, the farmer feels a certain complacency in his pastor having beautiful cows and a flourishing farm. It was evident to all that my

farm-servant had a wide scope given him, all buying and selling went through his hands, and it was only in the morning, after prayer-time, that he consulted me in a general way as to what was to be done. If I wanted the horses for a journey I always spoke to him beforehand, and abode by his decision, till I kept a third riding-horse, for whose keep I gave him compensation. Generally speaking we discussed farming matters during our drives. I do not remember a single unpleasant word between us, we were always on the best of terms, and he was only out of sorts when the weather was unfavourable for sowing or reaping.

I may here venture to make this general remark, that a pastor should not farm like a bailiff or a professional farmer, and should therefore avoid speaking over much on the subject of agriculture ; rather let him listen intelligently to what others may have to say upon it.

As to the advantages of successful farming, they are evident. First of all there is the greater independence, next the more easy supply of all domestic wants, and finally the very decided increase of income.

Again, a pastor who farms is brought more '*en rapport*' with his flock. He has a share in their anxieties, labours, and disappointments, has many opportunities of doing them small services, has, in short, more points in common. Even his sermons gain in illustrations and analogies ; and the farmer believes in the sin-



cerity of the prayer the pastor puts up for an abundant harvest all the more when the latter has a stake in it! Holy Scripture has not disdained to make especial reference to natural themes: our Lord speaks of the sower and the seed to illustrate the influence of his word; points to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air to warn us against over-carefulness. The vine and the branches tell of the close union between himself and his people; the grass and the flower proclaim the transitoriness of man; and, finally, it is declared, that 'whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' The Church honours agriculture by her celebration of the harvest-home festival, which a dweller in cities can hardly understand, with the joy of which he cannot sympathize, since he has not shared in the previous toil. The farmer feels his dependence upon God more strongly than any one else, receives everything more directly from him. I take pleasure in recalling the days when I used to walk in my fields, and rejoice in God's visible and abundant blessings there. My farm-servant became more and more a member of my family; the children loved and respected him, because he was not treated like a servant. I will just give an instance of the terms we were on. One Sunday that I had to set out at four o'clock to preach in a distant parish, I heard him in the yard quarrelling with his worthy and pious wife; and as we sat together driving, I exhorted



him to patience and gentleness. He replied that he had already been reproaching himself, but that irritability was his constitutional failing. After the sermon, as I was leaving the church, a rich farmer asked me for a certificate of baptism for his son, and offered me first five, then ten, then fifteen dollars, if I would make him out two years older than he was, in order that he might escape serving as a soldier. I was very angry at such an audacious proposal, and at length rebuked him in a loud voice. My old servant, who was standing at the gate, was listening, and, when he saw me, called out, 'Mr. Pastor! Mr. Pastor! what sort of a coat have you got on to-day?' I looked at him in amazement, and asked what he meant. 'Is it not the *gown*?' he said with a quizzical air; and yet we are not beautifully patient and gentle.' I gave him my hand, and cried, 'Now, then, we are quits, and neither can reproach the other.'

The unfortunate tendency of the present day to reduce social ties to a mere question of interest shows itself in the commuting payment in kind into payment by money, which is always a hard sort of transaction, leaving no pleasant memory behind, and telling injuriously upon the relationship of the pastor to his flock. Now, to a pastor who is loved and respected, the congregation will willingly give such things as eggs, sausages, butter, bread, etc. etc., of the best; but one who shows himself greedy and

discontented will get them bad enough, and, indeed, it is but meet that he should be punished in his most tender point. When the farmer's wife has dressed herself neatly, and goes to the parsonage with her gifts concealed beneath her white apron, bringing her choicest things, she naturally likes to be received by the minister's wife in the parlour, not the kitchen, and treated with friendliness, not condescension. In all probability, many of these payments in kind to the clergy were originally free-will offerings, which became customary, and then in process of time compulsory; and whenever they are over-scrupulously examined or criticised, it sours the givers, and predisposes them to hold back as much as possible. It is far better to be easily pleased, and to receive as though it were still a free-will offering, than to be measuring and weighing, and seeing whether it is quite correct. If you lose a little at first by this more liberal course, you will gain in the long-run. It is always so in life: the discontented have short measure meted to them; to the grateful and easily pleased more is given than they have any claim to. Whether the farmer gives his pastor the best or second best wheat is not important only as a matter of profit or loss, but chiefly as an index of feeling.

The word of the Lord, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you,' is spoken indeed to all, but espe-

cially to the minister. He who preaches God's word pure and undefiled, loves his flock, and is earnest in prayer for each one of them, can patiently bear a little deficiency in quantity or quality : this will soon right itself. But it will never be cured by complaints and exactions. For many long years, in certain parishes, the congregations have had the gospel dealt out to them in scanty measure, and mixed with much human chaff ; we need not, then, wonder if they mete back to us in the same measure. A farmer who, on one occasion, himself brought his offering of corn to me, asked whether I would measure it after him ; to which I replied that, in any case, I was sure to be receiving too much, as he hardly ever came to church, and I could do next to nothing for him in return. He looked at me with amazement, and asked whether he was making a mistake in bringing it. 'Not so,' I answered ; 'but it is my duty, on my part, to pray and beseech you to save your soul alive ; and, as hitherto I have had so little opportunity of discharging this duty towards you and your family, I consider that I receive too much from you.' This led to a longer conversation, and the consequence was, that the man was in his seat at church on the following Sunday. Again, it is by no means desirable that the fees for baptisms, marriages, etc., should be gathered in by the sacristan ; it is far better that the parishioners should themselves take them to their pastor. This gives an opportunity for a word in

season, and for friendly conversation ; but care must be taken not to cut our visitors short, or abruptly dismiss them. Upon one occasion, a day-labourer came to me to pay the fee for the baptism of his child. After expressing his wonder that it should come to so much, he proceeded to draw out of his purse two additional *groschen*, which he wished to give me because I had done the thing so handsomely, and given his wife such a good lecture. I was very much pleased with these two *groschen*, because I saw that the poor man wished to show me kindness.

#### THE SACRISTAN AND SCHOOLMASTER.

The sacristan, who is also the schoolmaster, is a very influential personage in a German village. Our dearest and best treasures, the children, are confided to him to be trained in the use of those weapons whereby they are to overcome the world ; to have that seed sown in their young hearts, the fruit of which is to refresh them during the burden and heat of life's day, in the wilderness through which their path lies. In the former part of this book I have several times touched upon the relation between pastor and sacristan, which was indeed inevitable ; for the former can no more exist without the latter than without his shadow. In all the minister's work the sacristan is fellow-worker, and each may materi-

ally assist the other or embitter his life. For this reason I return once more to this important subject, not to promulgate any theory of my own thereupon, but to give my younger brethren some of my actual experiences. If any are inclined to think that I am too partial to the race of sacristans they are probably right, for I have been fortunate in my connexion with them.

To begin within my first ministerial year, my old sacristan was my truly fatherly friend, from whom I learned much, and to whose memory I shall always be grateful. At that time candidates for the post he held were not, as now, obliged to spend six weeks at a normal school before their second examination. My old friend had, for his part, never seen an institution of the kind, and was by no means partial to the younger schoolmasters in the neighbourhood who had been so trained; indeed, I suspect that he may have slightly prejudiced me against them. He used to call them would-be professors, was much aggrieved by their long coats, detested their hats, and considered their heads equally empty. Once upon a time I paid a visit to a professor of this sort, and on asking him who his father was, received for reply that his father was a landed proprietor, whereas it afterwards came out that he was a small farmer; also, he represented his brother as studying for an agency, and devoting himself to the course of science requisite, which in plain German proved to mean that the said brother was

working as farm-servant to his father, and had been a short time at a seminary. Nothing made my old friend more furious than to hear such men speak of 'undertaking religion and history,' or deprecating the name of sacristan, and designating themselves rather by that of schoolmaster, or contriving casually to bring in how such and such a one had addressed them as *Mr.* So-and-so. Trifles of this kind, and indeed the whole bearing of this class of men, were generally unpopular. Their duties as sacristans were distasteful to them, and many of them they held degrading to their dignity, and unbecoming their refinement. Disputes of a most unpleasant nature not unfrequently arose between them and the clergy, and it became a generally received opinion that the normal-school teachers were an overbearing set. Very often they were young and inexperienced, and the sort of culture they had received tends to self-conceit. In a short time they had been crammed with facts rather than grounded in principles. They had become familiar with scientific language; and with little more. They had a certain expertness in the popular method of school-keeping; and the pastors, who knew less of this modern system, were looked down upon, and sometimes even ridiculed by them. As for the special avocations of the sacristan, they pronounced them servile offices, etc. The consequence was that, by way of counteraction, the pastors began rigorously to claim, as imperative, services that had



been previously considered optional. The strangest points of difference now arose. Was the sacristan officially bound to carry the pastor's canonicals, etc., to the chapel-of-ease? to come himself to the parsonage on Saturday evening, for directions connected with the morrow's service? or might he receive them by a messenger or a letter? was he obliged to meet the minister on his arrival at the chapel-of-ease, and carry his carpet-bag? was he to make collections in person? to go round the village, and deliver the invitations to funerals and weddings? was he to obtain the pastor's permission for every half-holiday he gave? to find out the hymn for the minister before the service began? to wear the sacristan's cloak during church-time, or a brown or green coat at pleasure? These and other questions of the kind began to be as gravely mooted as though the welfare of the world were at stake. But, in point of fact, the war was waged against the real or supposed presumption of the youthful sacristans; and he who gave himself no airs came easily off. Strange how men love to push their claims to the utmost, and so provoke opposition. The sacristans banded themselves together, and strengthened themselves in their rebellion; the pastors petitioned Government to take measures for their subjugation. I remember one synod in particular at a meeting of which very little was said on any spiritual theme; but the most remarkable complaints were laid and plans devised for taming these refractory gentry,



the new-fangled sacristans. Most severe and decided of all in their projected measures, were those pastors whose own humility was somewhat questionable ; for each of us observes with greatest readiness that mote in the eye of his neighbour which is akin to the beam in his own. There must have been some ground, no doubt, for the accusation of clerical pride so often brought against our order ! When this synod was over I drove back with my dear old friend—for I was again fortunate in my second cure, in finding the sacristan—a pious and judicious man—and told him of the schemes that had been under discussion ; to which he replied, in his slow and cautious way, ‘ No good will be done that way ; this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.’ I pondered that observation, and found that the old man was perfectly right. Pride and presumption are not to be put down by laws and rules ; their tendency is ever to exalt themselves above all such. The pride of the pastor will never conquer that of the sacristan, for Satan cannot cast out Satan. It is only humility that can overcome pride. But true humility is as rare as true faith. It is a strange thing that we should think humility so lovely in others, and yet, though we would gladly be loveable, follow so little after humility ourselves. A truly humble man goes peacefully through life ; but pride makes people so unwieldy that they are constantly knocking up against others, and every one feels an antagonism to them. In short, there is

no fault that makes our poor humanity look so lamentable and laughable as pride and self-conceit.

If, however, we calmly and candidly consider the antecedents of the young man who comes to fill the post of sacristan and schoolmaster in a country village, we shall own that it is but natural that he should be a little conceited. He has spent three years in the strict restraint of a seminary ; suddenly he becomes a gentleman at large, and is actually called *Mr.* So-and-so. He has reached this goal by much effort and many a self-denial. A successful examination always elates the old Adam within us, and his self-complacency soon passes into conceit. He who vividly remembers his own college days, or has seen a lieutenant wearing his sword and epaulettes for the first time, need not wonder that the youthful schoolmaster should rather overrate himself. He can prove in black and white that he is respectable and well-informed. The whole village treats him with deferential kindness, and more especially so those families who happen to have a daughter who would like to be sacristaness. Now, if the pastor be the only one who offends his self-conceit, it is but natural that he should not particularly appreciate the pastor. And there are many pastors who seem, from the very first, determined to do all they can to humble the young man ; who let him stand at the study door, and lay down rules, and give him all manner of directions, on purpose that he may feel his dependence upon them.

But the law works only wrath, *cannot give life*, as we have more than once observed ; and so the youth sets himself to do just so much, and no more, as may be positively demanded of him ; and if the pastor encroaches, he resolutely resists him.

At first he opens his school, and is sincerely anxious to manage it well ; then comes the pastor to see how things are going on ; and even in the way in which he listens to the schoolmaster's questions, there is something contemptuous ; or perhaps he interrupts him, and finds fault with his method in the presence of the children, so that they may observe his deficiencies. All this sours the young man. I have often been much touched by the manner in which, in the Old Testament, the Lord God condescends to woo, as it were, the love of his people ; if, therefore, the pastor be the Lord's servant, he must know how to woo hearts, and especially that of his sacristan. The devil is always rejoiced to put enmity between those whom God has joined together ; to sow coldness and distrust between man and wife is one of his great achievements ; but still greater his gain if he can occasion discord between the minister and the schoolmaster. All the pious members of the congregation lament such a state of things ; and the rest are sure to turn it to their own account. I must, however, once for all, publicly declare, that I believe pastors are, generally speaking, more to blame in the matter than sacristans. I know that I shall meet with oppo-

sition if I assert that gentleness, patience, and humility are the only means of managing a subordinate ; but for all that, I am convinced of the truth of my assertion. Some say that young people cannot bear this sort of treatment, and will inevitably be spoiled by it ; but the important question is, Hast thou, my clerical brother, got this genuine humility and love in thy own heart, for make-believe gentleness and kindness will not answer the purpose ? ‘ This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting ; ’ and it is well worth the pastor’s while to pray and fast for his schoolmaster’s sake.

If both pastor and schoolmaster be unconverted men, their disagreements may indeed give offence to the congregation ; but they need not be wondered at, since it is written, ‘ There is no peace to the wicked.’ Nevertheless it does often happen that two such get on very well together. Either the pastor does not see, or winks at what he sees, and the schoolmaster is glad to be left alone, and able to do as he likes. In such a case their good understanding does even more harm than their enmity, since that would make each some sort of check upon the other. There are pastors who hardly take any pains at all about the schools ; visit the parish school once a year, and that belonging to the chapel-of-ease quite casually. Now, the master knows that it is the pastor’s duty to visit both far more frequently ; and although his staying away may suit him well enough, yet he talks of it, and

the congregation by no means approve this want of interest shown in their children. If the pastor only goes into the school to receive a list of names, and prepare the necessary reports for Government, it is not likely he should find much pleasure in it. When the school is ill-attended, the master often wishes the parents to be admonished from the pulpit ; but I do not counsel this, for generally speaking parents who neglect this matter are not to be found in the church. It is far better to express the cordial pleasure and approval that every case of regular attendance gives one. If there be need to rebuke, it is wisest to go and see the parents in their own home, and ascertain whether there is good reason for the children's absence or not. There are many cases which silence all censure, as, for instance, where the mother is sick, and a little girl is kept away from school to attend to the house, and carry her father his dinner into the fields, or when an elder brother is placed in charge of the younger ones, both parents being necessarily engaged. If the pastor consider it beneath his dignity to ascertain why this or that child is absent, and refers the matter to the civil authorities, he gives great offence to the parents, who consider their interference a disgrace. Again, special measures must be taken upon those occasions where the children have an opportunity of gaining more by work during their absence than will suffice to pay the school fine. It is better to talk the

matter over with the master, and give a few days' regular holidays, than to have irregular attendance. If only the pastor take a genuine interest in the school, is the assistant of the master, not merely his ruler and inspector, then they will soon understand each other. For in point of fact the whole parish, children and all, are the pastor's proper care, the schoolmaster is his representative, and does the work the former could not overtake alone. Nothing can be more mistaken than to look upon the schoolmaster's office as perfectly separate from that of the minister. At the baptismal font the Church undertakes the duty of teaching the children all that the Lord has commanded us. Consequently the Christian national school has its origin in the rite of baptism, and its object is to water the seed sown in the child's heart by that holy sacrament. The pastor, therefore, should never look upon the school as an accidental adjunct to the Church, but rather as necessarily and inseparably united with it. Accordingly, it is his interest to be on thoroughly good and cordial terms with the schoolmaster, and if he can get at him in no other way, he must when on his knees in his closet go after him and seek him until he find him. If the schoolmaster feels that his pastor has the spirit of prayer, he will not long stand out against him. A believing schoolmaster placed under an unconverted pastor has indeed a difficult part to play ; but a pastor may much more easily gain the heart of an unconverted schoolmaster, if



only he set himself to the task in genuine humility. Above all, it will be the part of wisdom to avoid as much as possible raising any of those vexatious questions we have noticed a few pages back ; and if the sacristan be wanting in small acts of courtesy and consideration, to overlook it, while taking care to treat him with respect, and to show him any little kindness that may lie in one's power. When he comes on Saturday evening to get the hymn for the morrow, he should be pressed to take a seat, and conversed with as a fellow-worker, not an inferior. No sacristan has a perfect pastor, no pastor a perfect sacristan ; wherever they may meet you have a couple of poor sinners. In reading St. Paul's words to the Galatians, ' Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ ;' and, ' If any man be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one *in the spirit of meekness*, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted,' I have often been led to reflect upon the relation between pastor and sacristan : the spirit of meekness is the one thing needful here, but this only comes by prayer and fasting, and not by cautious calculation. The Apostle's rule of heaping coals of fire upon the head of another is by no means easy to follow, and he who attempts it must take care that he does not burn his own fingers to the secret amusement of the sacristan. These young men are aware that all sorts of services are expected from them, which they consider beneath their dignity ; they are therefore not quite at their



ease when they withhold them, expect to have the omission noticed, and are prepared to retort. It is always an undignified position to be armed to the teeth and no enemy in sight ! An old and excellent pastor had a very young sacristan appointed to his chapel-of-ease, who was of course much wiser than the old gentleman. On Sunday the latter came driving up in his old vehicle, which had no step ; the former sacristan had always been in the habit of bringing him a chair to get out by, but the new one stood at the window with his long pipe, and watched the old minister struggle down, for he was already infirm, then get out his foot-bag and his canonicals, and finally enter the schoolroom, with an apology for not being able to take off his hat, having both hands full. The young man was visibly embarrassed. His room looked very bare and empty, and wanted even necessary articles of furniture. The next Sunday the old pastor came again, bringing a good chest of drawers, which he meant to give to the young tyro, who stood as before at the window, watching the pastor and his servant getting out the drawers with considerable trouble, then carrying them into the room and placing them in the best way. Added to this the pastor had as before his foot-bag to carry in. When he left he congratulated the young man very kindly, having heard that the children liked his way of keeping school. The Sunday after that he came with two chairs, which were also a good deal wanted ; his servant

carried in one, he the other, upon which the young man gave in, felt thoroughly ashamed of his churlishness, and hurrying out, brought in the foot-bag, and all the other things, taking care to lay the foot-bag down upon the warm stove. I had this anecdote from himself, not from the pastor.

Again, we must not be too much surprised if the schoolmaster be sometimes a little surly and irritable, for in point of fact, he has a very hard post. He who knows from experience what it is to spend the whole day in a low, narrow room, crowded with children, and imperfectly ventilated, and to return to anxiety and embarrassment at home, as to how the daily bread for the family can be procured, or some indispensable article of dress purchased; such a one, I say, may well be indulgent; even the man's manner is not always faultless. Once, through a mistake, I arrived too early at my chapel-of-ease; it was winter time, and the usually active sacristan was still in bed when I entered the room. I asked him whether he was sick. At first he gave me no answer; then he became downright angry, bewailed his condition, worried the whole week through, and having no rest even on Sunday, and, finally, he showed me the door. I went into the church, and waited till he came. On the Monday, I paid a visit to his school, and spoke to him as usual. He asked leave to accompany me home, and when we parted, shook my hand warmly. I felt that he was obliged to me for not referring to

the scene of yesterday, but leaving it to him to make up for it by future friendliness. The pastor, indeed, should not insist upon his sacristan attending to all the conventional rules of politeness, so that his heart be in the right place. Once my dear old sacristan and I were walking before a funeral—neither of us had noticed that the old man was upon the right side—when a clerical neighbour came riding by and pointed out the impropriety, to which the sacristan replied, in his slow and very quiet manner, ‘Dear Sir, in our Bible it is written: “Be not conformed to the world;”’ and we went on, leaving the remonstrant silenced.

In short, we must set one thing steadily before us, the living with this important functionary in peace and concord. We must seek to raise the man in the estimation of the parish, and lend him all the assistance we can. His influence is greater than may be supposed; and if he hears and sees that the pastor seeks his welfare, he will do his best. But the main point will always be the winning over his heart to the Lord and the holy calling, in which he is our fellow-worker. If the pastor is in the habit of speaking lightly of the sacristan’s office, he need not wonder that the man should behave himself carelessly and irreverently at baptisms, burials, or marriages. It is, indeed, well worth our while to be much in prayer for him, and, besides, our own love and patience will grow thereby.

Of late, much has been done to increase the very inadequate payments of schoolmasters, especially by the worthy minister Von Raumer, who deserves the gratitude of all interested in the cause of popular education. He is pre-eminently the one who has had this cause at heart ; and if, hitherto, the race of schoolmasters have but imperfectly recognised his services, his name will be dear to them in times to come. But it is the especial duty of the pastor to see to it, that his sacristan does not suffer want, and he must not grudge him an occasional opportunity of earning a little over and above his pay. When, for instance, the sacristan's bees swarm, or his silk-worms require particular care, the pastor must, every now and then, be willing to keep school for him, must look out for similar occasions of rendering him little services, and have the necessary repairs of his dwelling promptly and properly attended to.

There can be no doubt that the sort of education bestowed upon our modern schoolmasters does lead to some discrepancy between their requirements and their means. Formerly, they used to carry on some handiwork as well ; to be tailors, weavers, cobblers, etc. ; and then they made a comfortable living. This they no longer do, though the schoolmaster has still a good deal of time to spare, especially in summer ; but then it is difficult to find any employment that would suit him. The old race of schoolmasters used to help their neighbours in the harvest, and knew how

to turn their hand to work of any kind. My first sacristan was, indeed, old and somewhat infirm; but, during the harvest, he used to go daily and superintend the women hay-making, and to work with them as far as his strength allowed. He was not, indeed, paid in money, but he got many a privilege, and dined free at the table of the bailiff like the rest of the overlookers. Without help of this kind, poverty sometimes reaches such a pitch in the sacristan's home, that one cannot wonder at the man losing all energy and cheerfulness, more especially if his wife be town-bred, want to manage things in town-fashion, and be ashamed of household work. At a conference of from fifty to sixty schoolmasters, there were great complaints made—more particularly from the better paid—as to the difficulty of making both ends meet. An old man, who had been fifty years in a situation that was estimated at about seventy thalers, sat by in silence; and as, although he did not wear a close coat, he was respectably, and even handsomely attired, he was asked how it was he got on so well. To which he replied, 'I am an unlearned man, and cannot think of entering into a discussion when I am amongst my colleagues, who have been better taught; but I would just say, to the glory of my God, that I have never known want. Only in the houses of many sacristans there are constantly expensive guests who eat up everything. But "godliness is profitable for all things," and we have the

promise that even in this life we shall lack no manner of thing that is good.' Upon which many began to protest that they lived very quiet lives, seldom even seeing a neighbour, and begged the old man to explain himself, which he long declined to do, expressing a fear that he should give offence; at last, however, he said, 'The guests that I mean are Pride and Discontent.' At which some murmured, but the greater part held their peace, for the old man was a very humble character.

The year 1848 showed indeed plainly, that it was not always the best-paid schoolmasters who managed best and were most contented. The question of how highly a master's income should be rated, is difficult or rather impossible to answer. A man's well-being depends mainly on his character. The gift of good management is not given to all, and the interpretation of essentials is very different. In short, the eyes with which men see things are different. One is always looking into the empty vessels and sighing, another looks into those that are full and gives hearty thanks. The one counts his 200 pence, and calculates and calculates till care takes up its permanent abode in his mind; the other's eyes wait upon the Lord who has often blessed the small sum, so that there has been enough and to spare. The first thing that we must try to insist upon is that the schoolmaster should have daily family prayer. Many think it is enough that they always open and close school



with prayer, but their own family ought not to be neglected. When the schoolmaster comes to the parsonage on the Saturday evening it must be so managed that he should share in the family worship there, and the opportunity be improved by a little religious conversation. The choosing of the hymn will also give occasion for this. The pious people in the village like to hear family worship going on in the schoolmaster's house, and even the ungodly feel a respect for the man who does not merely sing hymns in church and school because that is part of his office, who, in short, is not a hireling only in the kingdom of God.

The increase of population has led to schools with many classes in large country parishes and in small towns, and in some places we find two, three, or even four teachers. When I was a school inspector I occupied myself a good deal with devising a system for such schools, and although it was never so matured as to be practically carried out, I will still mention it,—perhaps it may receive further consideration from the friends of education amongst us.

In an ordinary national school the kind of instruction to be given does not very well admit of the school being divided into three or four different classes. In the lowest class the teacher has hard work to get the children to read tolerably, and to take the first steps in writing and arithmetic. The first class too gives employment enough in the preparation of the children for confirmation, but the intermediate classes



may very probably be taken more easily, the teacher relying upon his final exertions.

Now, presuming this to be the case, a great evil is done by moving these pupils away from under him. His personal influence upon the child's character is diminished, so is his educational energy, and still more his affectionate interest in the well-being of that child. According to the present system the chief aim is the imparting a certain amount of knowledge, but, in fact, what the children of the lower classes want is *moral culture*. Now, if they are only for a short time with one teacher after another, they can never become much attached to any of them. My plan, therefore, would be that wherever there are three or four teachers there should be as many schools, so that the same teacher might carry on the same children from first to last, but not in the same way as country schools, with one master, are managed—new children being taken in every half year—but rather so as to allow of each master receiving younger children at an interval of one or two years, and never having more than two divisions under his care. Say, for example, that the first division entered at Easter 1840, the second will enter at Easter 1841. The whole school will be under this master's care from six to eight years; in 1842 and 1843 the little children will be taken in by another master and kept till their education is over, and so in the case of the two other masters.

Upon the present plan the children may very probably fare as did that ass bequeathed by a father to his three sons, who each used him successively, but always left the feeding of him to the care of the brother who was to have his services on the morrow, so that the poor animal at length died of hunger. Besides which, we must admit that there is something intolerably wearisome in having to go over and over again the same narrow round with one class only. One cannot avoid feeling some sympathy with the complaints of a man doomed to teach nothing but spelling and ciphering. There are, no doubt, some teachers who have an especial gift for the training of very young children, but there are not many who can endure labouring exclusively among them for any length of time. According to my plan, the teacher would have to advance with his children, and only to return to the rudiments, and begin over again, once in six or eight years. Again, this would lead to a healthy emulation between teachers, each would identify himself with his pupils, each would gain some credit for his pains. And then the sadly-weakened tie between parents and teachers would be renewed when the latter had the permanent care of their children. On the other hand, it will be urged that all teachers are not equally fitted to carry on the work of progressive education. To which we reply that all have had the same training, and been pronounced, upon examination, fit for their task. If

there be a diversity of talent and worth amongst schoolmasters, and those children who fell under inferior care would deserve to be pitied, I can only say that they would but share the risk every parish must run with respect to its pastor, while, at all events, it is undeniable that my plan would afford a powerful stimulus to exertion to every teacher, as he would have no one to rely upon besides himself. Again, the comparison between his success and that of the other masters would quicken his zeal and spur on his industry, besides which it would be easier to control him, and to test his achievements. In short, though I may not be able to do away with all possible objections, I am convinced that this method has such great and evident advantages that it would be well worth while to give it a trial.

The present system of breaking up the classes whenever they become too large, and appointing a new teacher to the additional class, tends still further to weaken the tie between the master and the pupils ; so that the latter sink to a mere numerical aggregate, and the master can never know any of them intimately. As for the greater progress made in learning, I doubt it much, and the experience of several other inspectors bears out mine.

The years of school attendance range from about the age of six to fourteen ; and I consider that, generally speaking, the school hours are too long. Another advantage of the plan that I have been advocating

would be, that the children could easily have their hours of attendance adapted to their requirements, to the condition of their parents, and to their domestic avocations. For the scholars who had begun their confirmation classes, and had been well taught and trained, up to their twelfth year, by the same master, two hours of regular instruction daily might suffice. These hours, of course, would have to be regulated by public convenience. Those children who spent the full time in school would share in the special instruction given to the others, and afterwards they might go on with their history, geography, and other studies. But for children destined to gain their daily bread by hard labour, it is above all desirable not to be plagued at school with things that they must inevitably forget, as they can never be made any practical use of. It is mainly important that they should be thoroughly grounded in Bible history and in their Catechism ; should know well the first four rules of arithmetic, and be able to write a legible hand.

Not long since, a gentleman of much experience in these matters told me that my plan was not a new one, having been tried in a gymnasium at Königsberg without success. The reasons for such a failure are too evident to be entered upon. And national schools are so essentially different from gymnasia that the objections which attended the working of the plan in the latter can have no bearing upon my argu-

ments. Once for all, however, let me state that there is no infallible method, and the less legerdemain the modern system pretends to in the matter of reading, writing, or ciphering, the less it seeks to fashion the living, growing human being by set rules, the better our schools will prosper. The personal influence of the teacher, and the condition of the parish, must have due weight given them. One thing is to my judgment certain : the present national school, with its rapid transference of the children from master to master, and its divisions into classes of special instruction, is a hindrance to the course of true education, reduces its moral influence to a minimum, wearies the teacher, lessens his interest in the children, alienates the parents from him, and makes them indifferent to the school altogether.

Nevertheless, under all circumstances whatsoever, it remains the sacred duty of the pastor to cherish the school as his dear child, to keep up Christian intercourse with the teachers, to comfort and strengthen them by God's word, and not to treat them as strangers, but as fellow-workers in bringing up the young of the congregation for the Lord of the Church. And, further, the pastor must often have a reference to the children in his sermons. If he wishes the master to bring them regularly to church, he must not forget them when they are there. The parents are pleased to hear their children addressed and exhorted ; and the children

themselves feel that they too have their place in the congregation, when something is said that concerns their special circumstances and duties.

In conclusion, we have thankfully to acknowledge that Govern`ment has of late paid great attention to the choice of normal school directors and other teachers, and that at the present time many young men are appointed to national schools who really do bring a hearty good-will to the work ; and, therefore, it the more becomes the pastor to receive them with all affection, and to see that they do not lose ground amidst the cares and trials of daily life.

### III.

#### SECESSION AND REVIVAL.

ALTHOUGH, since the war of liberation, there have been doubtless many individual souls who turned to the living God, when his hand smote them, and cried to him in their distress; yet these formed but a small minority compared to the Church at large, and there were wide districts in our fatherland completely wrapped in the sleep of death. Rationalism, assuming more and more the form of careless indifference, devastated the spiritual life of the people, dwelt in proud security in the parsonage, and held undisturbed possession of pulpits and altars. In higher regions, indeed, especially in the domain of theological science, the warfare had begun in good earnest, the *Evangelical Ecclesiastical Journal* and other periodicals had disturbed the enemy in his repose, but in the provinces he was still paramount. The churches themselves looked melancholy enough, dilapidated, neglected, and dirty, and the state of the parishes was still worse. Family prayer, and even grace



before meat, had become generally obsolete, or if they still survived, were too often a mere empty form. Indifferentism prevailed to such a degree that God and his word were forgotten and unmentioned. Here and there, however, a few individuals assembled in a conventicle, patiently bore the ridicule of pastor and people, edified themselves with old homilies, chiefly those of Schubert, Franke, and Arndt; and sang the old Church hymns.

As for the pastors, they farmed their land, played cards, and gave much offence to the few earnest members of their flock, but the others were sunk too low themselves to care about the matter. If it were not repugnant to one's natural feelings, and to the law *de mortuis nil nisi bene*, I could relate circumstances relating to pastors who held good livings, which might well check all wonder at dissent from a church that could tolerate such conduct in its ministers. As for the care of souls, that had been lost sight of altogether. A preacher in my neighbourhood having, on one Easter Day, held forth against the resurrection of the body, one of his hearers called upon him to ask whether he had rightly understood him, and found him playing cards. For answer he had a *groschen* taken from the table and tossed at him, with the following words: 'Go your ways, and buy a rope and hang yourself, and then you'll know all about the resurrection, and, if you can, come back and tell me.' The man so addressed came to me, and wished

me to write a petition to the king for him, that this pastor might be taken to task ; and when I refused, he said, after an interval of silence, ‘ I see plainly that one crow will not pick out another’s eyes.’ Another man, who suffered much from religious difficulties, and went about from church to church, hearing now one minister, now another, was in the habit of often coming to mine. Once, after an interval of non-attendance, he paid me a visit, and said : ‘ I have now left off going to church altogether, for I only get more and more confused, and less know what I ought to believe. One preacher says that repentance is necessary to salvation ; another, that it is a mere disease of the soul, against which we must guard ; another, that it is only necessary for openly wicked characters. So it is with regard to faith in the Lord Jesus. In your church, I hear the very opposite of what is preached elsewhere.’ I pointed him to the Bible, where he could examine the truth for himself, to which he replied : ‘ Yes, you all alike appeal to that, but which of you is right?’

As to the *Union* at the time I refer to, little had been as yet heard of it in the country at large ; it was only mentioned in the reports of pastors and superintendents. The pietists of the conventicle took no particular interest in it, and as for the alterations introduced into the communion service, they were little remarked ; it was enough that the king willed them. Neither did the new *Agenda* make any

commotion. A few pastors only, in whom Rationalism had not passed into utter indifference, discovered in it a return to the old obsolete orthodoxy, or even perhaps a catholic tendency. The more pious members of the congregations were glad to hear in church something that reminded them of the old volumes of sermons they had inherited from their fathers, and pronounced the new Agenda a beautiful book. But as the different conventicles kept up a system of intimate communication with other provinces, and by letters or visits from brethren, were made aware of what was going on in distant parts of the country, it so happened that we in the March came to hear of the melancholy occurrences in Silesia, and no doubt the reports that reached us were even exaggerated. It was incomprehensible to our serious people that such things should take place under the government of a king whom they were so willing to believe pious at heart, whom they loved so warmly, and prayed for so much. There was a universal conviction indeed, that the king had nothing to do with it. Soon after, however, there came men among us who had been eye-witnesses of the events in Hönigern and other places, and told how—the parishes having refused to accept the new Agenda because it contained false doctrine, and was at variance with Luther's Catechism—the pastor had been deposed and another placed in his stead; how there had been collisions between the people and the soldiery who were em-

ployed to enforce the acceptance of the Agenda ; and finally how several pastors, and those the most zealous and best, had been put in prison. The same intelligence, too, reached us from Pomerania. A man of the name of Bagaus, formerly a carpenter by trade, visited the conventicles, and addressed the people in a powerful and exciting strain, stirring up their suspicions against all ministers who made use of the Agenda, as being enemies to the Lutheran Church, which was henceforth to give way to a united *unirté*, or—as they preferred to say, playing upon the word—*ruinirtie* ruined church. The false doctrine of the French reformers was, they averred, to be mixed up with the truth of the Lutheran creed, and so on. The persecution this refractory party underwent gave them an appearance of being on the right side, and their writings were greedily read ; the State Church was pronounced to be a Babylon, and the attention of men was called to the life and conversation of those who preached even glaring scepticism undisturbed, while believing and pious pastors were deposed and imprisoned : hence it was argued the character of the movement might be clearly inferred, the true faith was to be put down, and the Church made over to unbelievers. Dancing, card-playing, and bad language, it was pointed out, were freely allowed, but meetings for prayer were sternly prohibited. At last the quiet population began to be stirred ; they got hold of the new Agenda, sometimes with, sometimes

without the knowledge of their pastors, and the question of the *Union* was variously discussed. The saddest part of it was that the inquirers got the most discrepant answers from the pastors themselves ; one would tell them that the union implied conformity of doctrine throughout the Church, another that the union had nothing to do with doctrine, and only meant the being joined together in the spirit of love. Attention now began to be paid to isolated expressions, and as is so often the case, the merest non-essentials were made the Shibboleth of a party. ‘If nothing important be meant, why should there be any alteration?’ it was asked, ‘why not go on using the same words as of old?’ Then the introduction of the word *universal* into the third article caused much perturbation in the popular mind. What could be the meaning of a *Universal* Church? Such a one would include all men, even if they led the lives of beasts, such a one would infallibly oppress and persecute the true and invisible Church, as indeed was now the case. Still worse was the formula prescribed in the communion service, ‘Our Lord and Saviour says,’ etc. ; this last was looked upon as an unmistakable proof of unbelief. ‘If the pastor be really a believer, let him,’ it was said, ‘speak in his own person, and not use a phrase which does not necessarily imply his acquiescence in the truth of the words he employs ; as well might the creed run as follows, ‘It is written in the Catechism, I believe in God the Father.’ But more offensive than all beside

was the title of 'United Church.' 'Where,' the inquiry ran, 'was the Lutheran Church ; was that done away with, had they ceased to be Lutherans ?' In short, even those who hitherto had taken no interest in questions of the kind, were drawn into the popular current of feeling, and the more obscure the exact meaning of the union, the more distorted were the representations of it that circulated among the people.

Most difficult, indeed, was now the position of the pastors in whom the people would else have reposed confidence. For my own part, up to this time I had not advanced beyond Lutheran pietism, and I had been drawn into the union like the majority of the laity, without foreseeing the consequences. The difference of doctrine between Luther and the other reformers was indeed known to me as a matter of history, but it had never assumed any importance in my inner life. I had rather been disposed to welcome the union of both churches with a certain enthusiasm, and had hoped only for an increased activity, never suspecting that it would occasion strife and division between believers themselves. But now the numerous questions addressed to me, and the severe measures taken in Silesia, led me to pay closer attention to the subjects under dispute, and I began to study the history of the Reformation, and the division between reformers as to the Lord's Supper. The conclusion that I arrived at was, that although a man may find peace to his soul, and attain to final salva-



tion without any clear conception of the Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments, yet that a church cannot exist without one definite and plain confession of faith on so important a subject. It used to be frequently said in general conversation at that time, and even laid down in controversial works, that the confessions of faith of the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches had so much in common, and that the points of difference were so unimportant, that the *consensus* of both was ground sufficient for a united church. But up to that period no one had formularized that consensus, and who was authorized to do it now? Or if any one did undertake it, where would he find adherents? Or of what avail would it be when practically both churches really diverged? The famous Order in Council of 1834, itself the offspring of perplexity, could in no way compose the public mind; it sought to compromise matters by ordering that both confessions of faith should remain as they were, and at the same time insisting upon the churches uniting in prayer and the holy communion. But how can one church have two conflicting and mutually excluding confessions of faith? If it were pleaded that all the union required was mutual love and moderation, one might reply that these certainly existed before the union was mooted, since the differences between the churches were so far forgotten that no one thought of asking to which a man belonged. The members of each used to unite in all Christian labours of love, such



as Bible and missionary meetings. As for the great majority, who were given over to Rationalism, trifling difficulties such as these were mere gnats, which they, having swallowed the camel of unbelief, made no account of at all. Neither certainly had the union itself been established in the spirit of love and moderation. It had led to people being persecuted and imprisoned for conscience' sake, a thing hitherto unknown in Prussia. It was often remarked that it could not have originated in a Christian spirit, since it attacked the believing part of the community, and left sceptics undisturbed. Prussia had indeed extended her protection to the French Reformers who had settled on her soil, and that was well; but that now her own true and faithful children were to be exiled on account of their ancestral faith, this was an unheard-of thing indeed.

For my part, I tried to comfort myself with the expression hitherto made use of in official documents, which was that of *Union*, not *United Church*; but this distinction no way satisfied the excited members of my own or of neighbouring parishes. They retorted, why then the innovations, why the breaking of bread, why the alterations in the new Agenda, and why these persecutions of such as will not accept the so-called amendments?

When the agitation had widely but secretly spread, it was much increased by the appearance of Kindermann, and after him of Ehrenström, the latter a man of

imposing external appearance, and having a great gift of popular oratory. His settled residence was in Stettin, but whenever he came to Wallmow or Brüssow, crowds streamed from great distances to hear him. He preached in barns or lowly dwellings, where his hearers had very inadequate space. Upon one occasion, when I had driven over to a neighbouring village to be present at one of his addresses, he spoke with great vehemence against the blending of true and false doctrine, quoted strong expressions of Luther against the reformers, and denounced the union as soul-destroying. He delivered a warning against all so-called believing pastors in the United Church, whom he characterized as devils in disguise, and wolves in sheep's clothing, and thus ended a discourse that was listened to throughout with sighs and groans of conviction and approval. Upon another occasion, I heard him deliver a sacramental address, of which the leading idea was as follows :—The blessed sacrament had always been the means of union between Christ and his members, had been the very central truth of the Christian Church, and therefore the devil had always made it his chief point of attack. First of all, in the Catholic Church he had incited the false priest to invent transubstantiation, and to withhold the cup from the laity. When this falsehood would no longer hold, came Zuinglius, who did away with the sacrament altogether, except as a type, a symbol, a commemoration. The devil, however, perceived that

he had wrought this latter snare too coarsely, and therefore he set up Calvin, who was a cunning Frenchman (the preacher well knew that his audience expected no good from any Frenchman), and he spun the thread so fine and delicate, that he deceived many, and all unbelieving pastors swore that the thing was all right. But our good father Luther was not to be so deceived, and he saw to it that the Lutheran Church should have the full comfort of the pure doctrine. In the Lutheran Church alone, the true body and true blood of Christ are administered. But Satan will never be at rest so long as, in the holy sacrament, this body and blood being really administered to the people, his power on earth was limited ; and therefore he invented the Union ; and the priests of Baal in the United Church pretended to their unfortunate flocks that brotherly love to the reformed party required the steps. Such love, however, was not a love that pleased God, but one which delighted the Devil, who was a murderer and liar, because he had, by means of it, deprived men of the bread of life. And, indeed, true Lutherans had daily experience of what love and toleration meant in the mouths of the United ; for were not they everywhere surrounded by *gendarmes*, were they not constantly threatened and punished because they would not accept false doctrine ; were they not deprived of their possessions, obliged to meet in secret for the worship of their God, and imprisoned for their conscientious bearing witness to the truth !

And this the united called brotherly love and mutual toleration !

Amongst some old papers of mine I find another sample of Ehrenström's manner of preaching. His followers were assembled in a large barn, and he took for his subject the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Places of the United Church : 1. In its Baptism ; 2. Absolution ; 3. Pulpit ; 4. New Agenda. 'In the United Church,' said he, 'men are not taught what is contained in God's word, but what the king has appointed worldly-wise pastors to deliver. Consequently the devil must not be alluded to in baptism ; he must no longer be exorcised, or in any way prevented enjoying his dominion undisturbed. We Lutherans have shaken off the devil's yoke, therefore he rages against us ; therefore the United persecute us, but God's judgments will surely come, etc. *Secondly*, As to absolution, the so-called evangelical ministers have no longer the right to bestow it, for these priests of Baal do not hold their commissions from Christ, but the King of Prussia ; accordingly, whoever will may attend their communion, and, whatever their character, receive the priestly benediction, nay, there will be an especial welcome for any ungodly official who persecutes believers, and their absolution, such as it is, will at once be conferred upon him. These proud Pharisees do not bear Christ's cross, but they love to display on their breasts an embroidered cross given them as a reward for per-

secuting the true Church. But we Lutheran pastors do stand in Christ's place, and therefore we have power to remit and to retain sins. We have the word of God pure and undefiled, and therefore Jesus the crucified and risen Saviour is our Lord indeed. Fear ye not, therefore, he is on our side. *Thirdly*, The abomination of desolation stands in the pulpit of the United Church ; for you know and have heard for yourselves that it is there taught that He is not the only begotten Son of God, but a wise teacher merely ; that the Bible is a human production, and not the word of God, that there is no hell and no damnation of the ungodly. In this way the congregations of the United Church are betrayed and deceived to their spiritual ruin ; and if any one testifies against it, he is driven out. *Finally*, The abomination of desolation reigns in the new Agenda. This is a very dangerous book ; it contains only half the truth ; all doctrine therein is adulterated and confused ; according to it there is no longer a Lutheran Church, and the worst of it is its plausibility, by which poor Christians are deluded, and persuaded by time-servers that they are safe in accepting it, and that there is scriptural authority for it all. But we Lutherans believe not in this new-fangled book which mingles truth and falsehood, but in the old Bible of our fathers, and we are accordingly pronounced stupid, and weak, and ignorant, because we cannot perceive any advantage got by mixing pure and impure water,' etc.

Such sermons as these increased the popular agitation. The pastors who had hitherto enjoyed the respect and confidence of the quiet in the land, now began to be regarded with suspicion, and their churches were more and more forsaken. The open secessions from the State Church were so numerous, that it was to be feared only those remained within it who were quite indifferent to God and his word, and even those who had not formally seceded, left off coming to our services, and attended the meetings held by Ehrenström. The distress and perplexity of pastors and superintendents went on increasing.

Meanwhile the change in the cabinet, and the death of the Minister Altenstein, had given a new direction to church affairs. There was a conviction felt in high quarters that the recent attempt had been a complete failure, that religious convictions were neither to be created nor suppressed by legal measures, and that the more severely these last were enforced, the stronger the resistance they would call forth. Indeed the willingness to suffer for the faith was a source of strength against which all political and bureaucratic weapons had proved utter failures. That in Prussia thousands should leave their loved fatherland for the sake of their creed, was so unexpected and amazing a thing, that the king and his Minister Eichhorn had to adopt another course in hopes of quieting the popular mind. Those who had been imprisoned for recusancy, were set at liberty, and the seceding ministers were



allowed free scope. But confidence in the ecclesiastical authorities having once been lost, was not easily to be regained. The separatists had now a feeling of triumph, and their conviction of the justice and strength of their cause increased visibly. Their general synod held in Breslau in 1841, had a great influence upon the course of events. Ehrenström had been a member of this synod, but he soon found it difficult to submit to its decisions ; indeed this was intolerable to his fanaticism and fiery zeal. He regarded the negotiations between this synod and the civil authorities as treachery to the Lutheran Church, and accused the former of falling away from the word of God. The result was that, after many deputations sent to him, and much discussion, he was threatened with suspension, but this threat took no effect upon him or his fanatical followers, by whom he was held in the deepest reverence. Indeed, their excitement of feeling was so great that none of them would hire out horses or carriages to the offending deputations, and a farmer who still belonged to the Established Church was obliged to convoy them back again.

The enmity against the national Church and its pastors had now reached its maximum. The separatists refused to send their children to school, refused to pay their rates to Church school, or pastor. Fines were imposed, reluctantly indeed, but of necessity ; those who had the money holding it to be wrong to give it willingly, and preferring to have it extracted



by distraining. Gradually these distrains grew more and more oppressive; the day-labourer's cow and necessary household furniture were taken away, even the bed under the widow was seized. In this way the poor lost more than double what they owed, for when their articles were put up to auction they went for nothing, very few choosing to bid for them at all, under the impression that a curse lay on goods thus violently wrested from the poor. And when, at length, permission was granted to these separatists to have schools of their own, they were willing to avail themselves of it, indeed, but not under the conditions affixed; they would neither apply for the requisite concession, nor employ masters who had gone through a regular training, consequently their schools were closed and their teachers punished. In short, in every way they courted persecution. 'Our schools,' they said, 'cannot possibly be made mere private and party schools, any more than our religious services are so, for we are the true Lutheran Church, which alone is the rightful church in Prussia. The United, or Royal, or State Church, call it what you will, has no historical right, and every step taken by us towards its recognition is treason against God and our consciences.' The sacrifices that these men made to pay their ministers and maintain their schools was very great, added to which they had to endure perpetual fines and distrains. The more untenable Ehrenström's position became, the more he cherished

the idea of emigration to America. All this time the Minister Eichhorn, who inherited the luckless measures of his predecessor Altenstein, had the best and noblest intentions ; and proceeded to appoint a commission out of the different provinces to consult upon the best course to pursue. At that time I had frequent opportunities of private conversation with this statesman, who, for his part, professed himself unable to understand what these people wanted, seeing he had granted them all possible liberty. He spoke, however, from the stand-point of personal piety, but overlooked the necessary foundations and conditions of a visible church. He was a man of large and liberal spirit, a lover of union in the true sense of the word, and had heard and heeded the decided *veto* church history records against all attempts to coerce religious convictions, and hence it was difficult to persuade him to take any steps against the encroachments and excesses of Ehrenström, though it was as clear as the day that the latter was following his own selfish ends rather than fighting for the truth. Indeed, this fanatic refused all negotiations or compromises whatever. We are the Lutheran Church, we are the persecuted Zion, he kept on crying, and his followers took up the cry. Gradually they came to openly proclaiming that no one could be saved in the United Church ; that she was the Babylon of the Apocalypse, etc. When at last Ehrenström found that his proceedings would no longer be tolerated, he began

to exhort his followers to emigrate. Everything was done, on the other hand, to keep these poor, misguided people back. Difficulties were raised as to passports, etc., but they contrived to overcome them all. As several had not money to cover the expenses of the voyage, four farmers came forward with 20,500 thalers to enable the poorer members of the congregation to undertake the step. In the February of 1843, out of one circle, no fewer than 436 obtained the necessary pass ; out of my parish alone I lost more than 150. There were most heart-rending circumstances connected with this emigration. The inhabitants of the March are devotedly attached to their fatherland ; they had to undergo a terrible struggle to tear themselves away from it ; and they sold land, houses, and furniture with many tears, taking away with them much that was worthless indeed, but dear through association. The most sacred ties of relationship had to be rent. Ehrenström might indeed cry, He that loveth father and mother, wife or child, more than the Lord, cannot be his disciple ; but for all that, hearts would bleed. Attractive as might be the pictures drawn of the religious liberty to be enjoyed in America, yet the parting from the homes of their fathers, the long voyage over the great ocean, the uncertainty of the future, weighed heavily in the opposite scale. Again, the young men liable to military service could not obtain a passport, and had to remain behind ; so had chil-

dren under guardianship ; even husband and wife had to be torn asunder, the one thinking it a sin to go, the other to remain. For instance, a farmer whom I knew, lived most happily with his wife, and their farm was in a flourishing condition ; but the man was pertinaciously assailed by Ehrenström on account of his wealth, and at last persuaded to emigrate ; while his wife, on the contrary, though thoroughly pious, could not make up her mind to the step, and remained behind. But her happiness was gone ; she ate her bread with tears. Her husband, on the other hand, could not forget his wife ; night and day he was tortured with self-reproaches for having left her. One Sunday evening, when the poor, lonely woman had gone to bed, there was a knock at the window, and on inquiring who it was, she heard her husband's voice ; he had returned to her ! Then there arose a generous conflict between them, the wife offering to go with her husband, and he to remain with her, since it cost her so much to quit her old home. However, very soon after, it ended in their selling everything, and sailing together. Upon hearing of this man's unexpected return, people came from far and near to convince themselves by ocular demonstration that a man who had crossed the great ocean could really have come back again.

After this first and most considerable emigration came a second, which was to be led by Ehrenström himself. In order to escape the trouble and

difficulty of getting a pass, no small number set out surreptitiously ; but they were seized, obliged to return, and delayed till they had taken the proper preliminary steps. These poor souls excited the greatest sympathy, and met with most hospitable treatment from the parishes they had left, till at length, all necessary measures being accomplished, the parting was repeated, and the departure final. As to Ehrenström himself, he was captured in Hamburgh, and punished for using offensive language against the State Church, and persuading people to emigrate ; but afterwards he joined his followers, who had formed a colony not far from Buffalo, and called it by the name of their native village. The remainder of the body, who stayed at home, submitted themselves to the Breslau Synod, and were thenceforth provided with religious ordinances in a regular manner.

About the time of the greatest excitement, a very gifted and pious man, of decided Lutheran tendencies, was appointed to a parish in which secession from the Church had most widely spread, while I had a cure given me in the small town near, in which Ehrenström had a large body of followers ; but he had not at that time repudiated the Breslau party, or initiated the emigration movement. Both I and my clerical neighbour felt the great difficulty of the task committed to us ; but we found strength in our common labour and common distress, and comfort in the word of God and in prayer. Before I moved

to my cure, I received sundry anonymous letters warning me against accepting it, because, they said, the true light had risen there, and people could discern false doctrine. The parsonage had long been empty, and although originally an excellent house, presented a desolate and melancholy appearance. I had left my family behind me, with the exception of one child. Not a creature welcomed us. I went to see a family whom I knew ; but those to whom I bowed in the street would hardly acknowledge my greeting, and in the evening idle boys took to throwing stones through the windows. On the Sunday, the large church was nearly empty. I counted fourteen hearers ; but among these, two had long been known to me by name, as having, before this party strife, been important members of the congregation, though they were now quite forsaken, as they had steadfastly resisted all attempts to estrange them from the national Church. One belonged to the Lutheran, the other to the Reformed party ; but each lived in most perfect harmony with the other, and maintained the true unity of the Spirit while remaining firm in his special opinions ; and these good men heartily lamented the divisions that were raging around them. My sermon dwelt upon the cross of the Lord Jesus, as the power of God and the wisdom of God. When the last hymn had been sung, these two men came to me in the vestry, and with great solemnity said, ‘ We adjure you before God,



to tell us whether, in the State Church, men are really allowed to preach as you have done ; and whether, had there been one of the authorities or one of the members of the Consistory present, you could have spoken thus without risk of being removed from your cure ?' At first I was shocked at the distrust such a question showed ; then I seized the Bible that lay before me, lifted it up, and repeated what I had before said in the pulpit, that, so far as my mind could grasp it, I would, through God's grace, keep back nothing, and add nothing to that which the mouth of the Lord had spoken. The two men folded their hands ; and one of them—a little man, with a lively glance—said, ' Then may God bless your coming among us !' In one of the chapels-of-ease I found a tolerable congregation, but the other was very empty indeed.

The first few months spent in this new cure were so prolific in experiences of various kinds, that I have only got a clear and distinct recollection of certain among them, without retaining exactly the order of their sequence. Anonymous letters poured in, and were often found in the hall before my study-door. I was sometimes rebuked as a lying prophet, a priest of Baal, a dumb dog, and so forth ; sometimes single texts, on which the Separatists laid great stress, were sent me in manuscript ; as, for instance, ' He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven ;' ' If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed ;' ' What fel-



lowship hath Christ with Belial?' 'Go out from them, and be ye separate,' etc. ; or else 'Cursed is the man who maketh flesh his arm,' etc. Other letters contained questions ; for instance, 'Are your worldly goods dear to you? remember that whosoever loveth the world has not the love of the Father ;' 'If you know the truth, how can you remain in the false Church? It is your income that holds you fast ; but what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Or, 'No doubt it is pleasanter to be in the parsonage than in prison ; but will it not be better to be in heaven than hell? He who does not bear the Lord's cross cannot be his disciple.'

But it was the new Agenda that most especially excited distrust and disapprobation ; and I was continually called upon to renounce it, and purify the Church from false doctrine ; and the more I protested that I did belong to the Lutheran Church, the more I was tormented with quotations from the passages in which the Lutheran doctrines appeared to be modified. I used this agenda, however, in the same spirit that it was given by the excellent King—as a check to the unbelieving, not as a strait-jacket to orthodox pastors. It was certainly never his Majesty's intention to have its mere letter made stringent upon all. I, therefore, chose out of it only such prayers and formularies as retained the old Lutheran expressions, and did all I could to reconcile

the people to the book as much as possible, the more so as I was allowed to use the ancient form at the communion. For if the assurance, so often given, be sincere, and the object of this union is only increased peace and concord, then each church must have the power to give full expression to its own tenets. Our late King wished to set limits to unbelief, not to circumscribe or weaken the confession of faith. It was the mechanical working out of the scheme by those who had no heart in the question that defeated the intentions of his Majesty.

Not long after my arrival in my new cure, a cry arose one Sunday morning that Ehrenström was expected that very day. In the afternoon, crowds streamed in on all sides, in vehicles and on foot. More than a thousand men were huddled together in the market-place. The great gift of popular oratory that the man possessed, and the persecutions he had endured, gave him dignity and might, surrounded him with a halo, till he was actually almost worshipped, and each word he uttered was received as if from Heaven. It was all the old story. 'The Lutherans are the true Church: no forgiveness of sins, no sacraments in the other. He who would be saved must come to us.' At the close of the sermon, the names of his recent converts were read out, and they were specially prayed for, as well as those who were inwardly convinced that peace was not to be found in the United Church, but as yet

feared the reproach of the cross too much to come out of her. The service ended with the whole assembly singing, in a loud voice and with great emotion, '*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.*' During the following week, I received several letters of renunciation, which all ran much as follows :—'As I desire to be saved, and as God's word is darkened in the United (*ruinirten*) Church, I renounce it henceforth, and return to the Lutheran communion.' Some brought these letters themselves, and spoke on the subject in a very presumptuous and offensive manner. At first I exerted myself to enlighten these people ; but they were so firm in their opinions that all attempts of the kind were useless. They kept to the one strain : 'If the Reformed Church be the true Church, we ought to go over to the Reformed altogether ; but if Luther, as you admit, was right in his views, we will hold to them. He would not be united to the Reformed ; and he was better grounded in God's word than the Government, or the Consistory, or even than the King of Prussia. There is only one way of salvation, and it should be clearly and definitely taught. Those who may drink pure water need not seek to mix foul with it,' etc. etc. If one tried to persuade them that the Union was only a symbol of mutual love and toleration, they mocked outright, talked of the bayonet and sword that had taken part in the controversy in Silesia, of the gendarmes and distrains ; and

asked whether that was the United conception of love and forbearance. In short, I came to the conclusion, that when once the spirit of dissent is fairly rooted it is not to be constrained, and that arguments are useless. It was very painful to see one after the other leave me, and still more to surmise that the few who remained did so because they were careless about God and his word. Ehrenström was, on his part, unwearied in his cry, 'We are the true Church : the Lord is with us : although we have been robbed of the buildings in which our fathers worshipped, and are now obliged to meet in barns, still in those barns we have the true Church.'

At this time, the schools in my district presented a very melancholy appearance ; in a class that should have numbered from eighty to ninety children I found only seven. Although the teachers were clever and worthy men, the cry was universally raised that the lesson-books used by them had been tampered with, and that fables were taught instead of the word of God. The Phonetic system, recently introduced, gave rise to a report that the children were obliged to make sounds like cats, bears, and swine ; were no longer instructed in the way their parents had been ; were brought up, indeed, not as human beings at all, but as brute beasts, and taught to roar, to grunt, and to mew. Such, it was averred, were the sad consequences of falling off from the old faith ; added to which these

poor children were expected to learn by heart profane songs as well as the accustomed hymns. It was vain to seek to set people right on these subjects; for they invariably retorted, 'What is the use then of all these changes? Were not our fathers wise men? Have they not got to heaven without any of these new-fangled ways?' As soon as the seceders obtained permission to take the step, they began to make great sacrifices to found schools of their own. But even after the emigration under Ehrenström, those seceders who were detained by the police were not to be persuaded to send their children to the parish school. In Wallmow, in spite of the remonstrances of the pastor, a poor widow was obliged to do so by the police; a gendarme in full uniform was to be seen by the whole village leading the boy into the school, where the worthy master gave him a most kind reception, but the lad was off in the afternoon. This scene was repeated several days running to the great amusement of the villagers, but at length the gendarme absented himself, and so did the boy. Indeed the indulgence now shown to the dissenters came too late, and but increased their contumacy. If those unwise measures of Altenstein had not been taken, all this irrational fanaticism would never have arisen; as it was, the seceders had the feeling of having been deeply wronged indeed, but also of having conquered; the concessions made them they looked upon only as evidence of this, and

ungraciously and suspiciously received or refused them. They proclaimed more and more loudly that the churches and their endowments belonged by right to them alone, faithful Lutherans as they were.

After Ehrenström had severed himself from the Breslau party his endeavour was to get an increased hold over his followers, and to make emigration a necessity. I sometimes met him in the street, and spoke to him, but he always replied with contumely and ridicule. When he heard that I occupied myself a good deal with the few who remained to me, and sought to warn them against leaving the church, he began to hold me up in his sermons as Satan's tool, or as the fat priest, by which latter expression he did not allude so much to the dimensions of my person, which were inconsiderable to begin with, and shrank more and more under the weight of care and anxiety which oppressed me night and day, but rather to the income he believed my post to bring me in. Everything was done by his party to stir up the two worthies I have before mentioned to emigrate. One of them had a visit from a neighbour and early friend, who earnestly besought him to free himself from the trammels of the false church and go to America, but he returned the following reply: 'As long as the Word of God is preached in the church I do not stir, unless indeed I could leave my evil nature here behind, and not take that along with me to America; in which case I would gladly join you.'



When I look back to the trying season I am describing, it wears a very different aspect to what it did at the time. It is always hard to be misrepresented and misunderstood, and to a pastor it is especially painful to be rejected by those who have themselves tasted that the Lord is gracious. The more nearly I approximated in faith and feeling to the seceders, the more their opposition depressed and pained me. Each new letter of renunciation that I received gnawed at my heart, and banished sleep from my pillow. But now I can adore the wonderful dealing of the Lord, which then I could not understand. 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,' said Christ to Peter, but all the same I grant that it is hard to sit in darkness and wait for the promised light. The church of God is that in which God's Word is preached pure and undefiled, and the sacraments administered according to His ordinance. And now I can see how, after the grievous apostasy of his church in our land, the Lord by means of sore conflicts restored to her one portion of truth after another. The conflict with Rationalism led to deeper study and deeper insight into the Scriptures, and to their replacing reason as the lamp to our feet, and light to our paths. And the Union brought about a struggle for the integrity of our creeds, and especially for the truth respecting the Holy Sacraments. Nor must we forget how much we owe to the faithful witnesses who



stood up for this. Thus it is, that God's ways ever lead out of darkness into light, and as Joseph declared to his brethren how their evil intentions had been overruled for good, so may the daughters of Zion say to all their foes. Rationalism led to the old banner of the Reformation,—righteousness by faith, not works, being again unfurled as the rallying-point of believers, and the signal of their triumph. Modern exegesis has arisen out of the battle with Rationalism. In like manner, the almost forgotten articles of faith of the Lutheran Church have been brought to light once more, and the rich treasures of earlier days unclosed for us. The study of the Reformation has brought back among us a living faith ; and Luther's doctrine respecting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, already triumphs in the German Church amongst the most spiritually minded, and least bound by party considerations. The task of the present day is to restore the sacrament of Holy Baptism to its proper place in men's estimation, as a means of grace and salvation. Baptism is still too generally a mere family festival ; its deeper significance is still too much overlooked. But never can the revival, the new birth of a church in any particular take place without throes. The cross belongs to the church as well as to her Master, and wherever old truths assert their lost supremacy, or assume new developments, those who confess them must consent to pass through the ordeal of tribulation and conflict. This fiery baptism has

hitherto been wanting to the Union, which was called into existence by the King, and has always had the support of civil authority, and more, which has had much evil done in its name. But there may perhaps come a time in which *another* union shall come to full maturity, a time in which all other questions shall be merged in this : who among us is willing to suffer, and even to part with life for the Lord's sake? Then, all who have suffered shame and persecution for the faith will be *united* in very deed. For, although God's grace has not bestowed upon us a spirit of prophecy, yet the signs of the times do point with increasing clearness to the development of a new heathenism, whether it be called progress, or civilisation, or humanitarianism, yea the time seems at hand when Atheists, Pantheists, so-called Friends of Light, German Catholics, and Reformed Jews, will all become conscious of their essential unity, and although toleration may now be their motto, yet they will not long tolerate the Church of Christ. When once the majority of voices is fairly established, and the rule of the lower has superseded the power of the higher, then the apostasy will formally set itself in array against the Lord's Church. But this heathenism, which threatens us, and is already striving for dominion in the land, overlooked only by dull eyes, is not the same as in the early days of the Church ; it carries its sting in its heart, and therefore only hates its opponents the more. Wherever it prevails,

no man will inquire about denominational names and catechisms, but the *true union* of all Christians will be evident enough. The Lord grant faithful witnesses to his Church in those days !

This glance into the future is by no means intended to weaken the importance of the Lutheran Confession of Faith, nay, this will be the banner round which Christians will especially gather, because it bears witness to the eternal word which shall endure when heaven and earth have passed away.

The future is in the Lord's hand, and we know that he will order all events to His own glory, and has thoughts of peace, not anger to his people. But the question for us at the present time is how best to keep ourselves free from sin. In spiritual matters they only are truly wise who have a penitent heart. It is rather a delicate matter just now to preach repentance to our opponents ; let us therefore be all the more faithful in preaching it amongst ourselves ; let each of us bow down his own heart daily in true contrition, and then see how he may best draw the motes out of his brother's eye. The most devoted adherents of the Union must admit that the history of its origin and progress contains much that does not justify boasting. The Union, consciously and unconsciously, contented itself with indifference amongst the clergy, and spiritual slumber amongst the people. Although it had its birth in the heart of a truly noble king, yet it fell in its infancy into the hands of those

who heeded the favour of an earthly monarch far more than that of the Head of the Church. Bureaucrats and eye-servants endeavoured to bring about by force what could only result from a loving liberty. The hope of reward or advancement elicited the most flattering reports, often in the teeth of facts. In some towns, processions and celebrations were got up amongst those who were otherwise quite indifferent to church matters. It is a very alarming symptom that the Union should have been especially greeted by the children of this world, and that up to this present day it should be looked upon by them as the banner of Liberalism raised in the Church. This being so, one might well pray the Unionist not to be quite so self-complacent, and not to look down so superciliously on the poor Confessionists, but rather to remember their own sins, done in the name of the Union, from the time that the Lutherans were positively persecuted, till the present day, when they are obliged to apply for a concession, and subjected to conditions that go far to compromise the real existence of a Lutheran Church. But above all let Lutherans keep their own spirits free from bitterness ; and conscious of the high moral position they hold, let them stay themselves on the promises of God which he has given richly, and which in Christ are yea and amen. They have need of this caution, for temptations to bitterness abound, seeing it is not an easy thing to bear

being treated like a tolerated but irksome guest, in what was once the dear old paternal home. The more the Unionists appeal to ministerial orders, or, as in their last proclamations, to the spirit of the times, the requirements of the times, the more the latter must seek to place their feet firmly on the rock that cannot be moved. In our carnal nature there ever lies a pleasure in opposition, and the tendency of the spirit of the times is a very self-willed one. But true Christians will watch and pray especially against a prevailing danger. Confessionists are often reproached with their pride and presumption, but he who submits himself to God's Word, and the ordinances of the Church, may indeed be bold and confident, but can never be presumptuous or proud. In the Evangelical Church we recognise no supremacy but in the Bible and the confessions of faith, the ministers and church authorities themselves are subordinate to these ; nor can there be presumption on the part of those who hold to them alone ; rather they are presumptuous who exalt themselves above the letter of Scripture, and twirl and turn it to suit their own conscience. We must not forget that the Union has introduced some theoretical obscurities and perplexities from which the Church has to work itself free ; let us then work in patience and fidelity each in our appointed place, praying much for those whom God has set at the helm in these bad and troublous times, and not forgetting to submit ourselves to those in

authority over us according to God's holy will. It is no doubt unreasonable to expect a sudden and complete uniformity. The Union cannot, like the Lutheran Church, claim the dignity conferred by a historical existence of more than 300 years, but once for all here we have it actually existing; it has the strong support of the State on its side, and more, has taken firm root here and there. And although its career hitherto has been a way through the wilderness, and it has evinced much human alloy, still after all Union is the goal of Christianity, the blessing we wait for in faith. It is a small thing to the Lord to bring about such a development of a feeble germ as will turn into light what still seems darkness to our vision.

Meanwhile no one can suppose that he helps on such a result, or wins over others by disputing and quarrelling, rather it is high time that we all unite in genuine repentance. Wherever there are humble and penitent hearts, there is true union, and he who loves and will promote the cause of such union must be ready to acknowledge his own sins, and must fight earnestly against flesh and blood. Where any two souls cry out simultaneously, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' the partition wall is broken down, and they are bound together more firmly by a sigh than by the loftiest formulas. They but hinder real union prevailing among us who are always haggling about words and isolated expressions, and who want to

take down the old house before the new one is built. Yes, they who would weaken and undermine the force of the old Confession of Faith before a new and comprehensive one is *born*,—we will not say *made*,—are the enemies of the good cause. And once more, let those who stand up for the Confession, and love it best, love all the children of God upon earth as well, let them never despise whom the Lord has chosen. We have had enough of envy and strife, let us now seek to emulate each other in love, while careful to maintain the truth : the more clearly the truth is discerned the more strongly should love be felt. He who is firm in the faith may well have a heart of expansive affections. We shall reach our high aim of union, not by seeking to pare down the ancient confessions of these nearly related churches to a *consensus*, but by following after that obedience to God's word which they both alike require. We shall feel this union most intimately when contending with our common enemy, who in these days rears his head boldly amongst us. Union on either side with the world, or philosophy falsely so called, or the self-righteous spirit of the day, can never help on the union of the churches. Love is not to be commanded, not to be had by compulsion of any kind ; it is a free gift that one truly penitent heart will willingly offer to another, for the Lord has said that he will dwell with such, and where he comes he brings with him his peace, which passes understanding. No power of this world,



no wisdom of this world can bind hearts truly together ; this is only possible to the grace of Him who can turn them like to the water-brooks, till they flow together beneath the breath of peace that comes from his cross. Thus the Lord worked in the War of Liberation, when three princes, now in glory, bent their knees together to thank the God of battles for their victory won, and to conclude that holy treaty which was of course a great offence to the world and the devil, because founded on Christ. The union before the union of 1817 was the right one, and the authorities could have done nothing better than to leave it alone, and appoint pious men in church and school. Experience shows us how in the dark times a faithful pastor was sought and loved in Pomerania, the March, and elsewhere, and how the people would flock miles to hear him. ‘Through quietness and hope shall ye be strong.’ Force and diplomacy, let them come whence they will, whether from France or Berlin, will only bring trouble and division into the Church.

Melancholy as was the state of things I have been painting, the storm in the March was followed by a refreshing rain. After the emigration with all its heart-rending particulars was over, the great point was to win back those that remained. I soon came to the conclusion that each seceder required special treatment according to his circumstances and character. Some viewed the matter merely from the point of view of the intellect, and, arguing that the

Union was an infringement of the *rights* of the Lutheran Church, had joined the secession. Others, again, were perplexed and distressed by the idea that the Union obscured the truth, and so endangered souls. These last could not understand the purpose of it, since the Reformed party remained as separate as before, ministered to by a pastor of their own, and at the celebrations of their sacrament declining to use the altar but bringing their own tables into the church. Hence it was feared that there must needs be in the background some purpose to deprive the Lutheran Church of its ancient *creeds* as well as rights. This horror of the Agenda was so increased that the very sight of it was pain and grief to them. Now, the first of these two parties was quite unmanageable, full of hatred and bitterness, so that there was nothing for it but letting it alone till it came round of itself. It was blinded by spiritual pride, strong in controversy but without depth of religious feeling. The second party, on the other hand, needed comfort, listened willingly to God's word, only a deep mistrust and timidity held them back, and this was only to be gradually overcome by giving them what their hearts required. On the whole, it might be said that secession was now at a stand-still, and it remained so till the fresh impetus given to it by the lamentable measures of the General Synod of 1848, which, however, are now themselves gone the way of all flesh.

My dear neighbour and brother in the ministry had taken the right way, and by means of weekly and evening services dispensed the word of God richly to the remnant of his congregation, and thus kept them together. For my part, a journey that I took to attend the Conference at Trieglaff (at the time when Ehrenström and the Breslau party split) was attended with blessing. The common tribulation led to the assemblage of many brothers from a great distance, especially from Pomerania. Our position was discussed lucidly and in the spirit of prayer and repentance. The fellowship and brotherly love I met with gave me new life. Herr von Thadden, with his knightly bearing sanctified by the gospel, was to me a most imposing personality, and the love that seemed to unite all our members gave me a convincing proof that the Lord was with us of a truth. Upon my return I instantly began to hold prayer-meetings in my own house on Wednesday evenings, which were soon so well attended that the rooms were not large enough, and the windows were opened so as to allow those who were standing in the street to hear what was going on. Those who had left off coming to church, holding it to be a polluted place, stood at first irresolutely and timidly at a distance, and very slowly drew nearer. When the prayer-meeting was held in the large school-room they followed thither, but though there was accommodation for about a

hundred people it was soon found insufficient, and the only thing to be done seemed to move next into the church. My most faithful adherents were indeed a little anxious as to the result, but, however, it was finally given out that the prayer-meeting on the following Wednesday would take place in the church. Before it came round a rumour had arisen that Ehrenström was to make his appearance on that very same day. Soon after noon the seceders began to assemble, Ehrenström made his entry about five o'clock, in a carriage drawn by four handsome horses, and was greeted with profound respect. His sermon began about six o'clock, the market-place being densely thronged by a multitude who sang the old thrilling hymn, 'O Lord of heaven, on us look down,' at the top of their voices. About seven, the church-bell began to ring for my prayer-meeting. The church was very empty. I addressed the few there upon the text, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit.' Gradually others dropped in, till about nine o'clock the large church was quite crowded. I had felt my position among the people at stake, and had accordingly spoken with increasing emotion. Ehrenström had, in his accustomed manner, railed against the United Church, had bestowed all manner of opprobrious epithets on me, and when it began to rain, and he saw several of his hearers rush into the church, he had broken out into the most furious strain, had called the church a pig-sty, and me a shepherd of

swine, a lying parson, a priest of Baal, etc., till his own followers even were displeased with him. At the conclusion of my sermon, I asked the assembly to decide between us. The excitement had by this time risen so high that my voice could hardly be heard above the general sobbing and weeping. I demanded an answer, and had so put my question that a simple affirmative was sufficient. When I ceased there pealed forth such a hearty *Yes* from the people, that I fell on my knees, and the whole assembly with me, and with tears of thanksgiving offered up the parting prayer, and devoted myself anew to my Lord and Saviour to be his faithful servant to my life's end. Ehrenström meanwhile shook the dust off his feet, and never came again into my district.

That evening exercised a very marked influence both on the members of the church and of the chapel-of-ease, which latter had been as yet much less affected by the prevalent excitement. On the following Sunday both churches were full, and the prayer-meetings also were numerous and cordially attended. Indeed, so strong an impression had been produced in the neighbourhood, that the church accommodation became sadly inadequate, the pulpit steps and even the pulpit itself being often quite filled before the first hymn. Although the church was a new building, some anxiety was felt about the galleries, and they were propped by new iron supports. The order observed in the prayer-meeting was very simple.

First of all a hymn was given out and sung, two lines at a time ; then came the prayer, the reading and expounding of a passage of Scripture, a longer prayer, at which we all knelt, and the last verse of the hymn with which we had begun. The service lasted from about seven to nine o'clock. The contributions for lighting the church in the winter time were most liberal. People thronged in from the neighbouring villages ; and when the prayer-meeting was over, it was really imposing to hear them sing their favourite hymns on their homeward way.

During the first half-year I sought as much as possible to concentrate attention upon conversion, and chose such narratives out of Holy Writ as should place the call and illumination from above, justification, repentance, faith, and prayer, in most vivid colours before the minds of the people. I divided the history of the Prodigal Son into several sections : his leaving the father's house, his life in the far country, herding swine, coming to himself, arising, returning, and the running of his father to meet him, were all made the subject of several successive discourses. Then, again, I took Paul's persecution of Christians, Paul's conversion, Paul's labours ; the repentance, faith, and love of Peter ; these and other narratives in the Old and New Testament were thoroughly explained and applied to the hearts and lives of my hearers ; to which I added doctrinal teaching as to the means of grace, the Word of God, law and gospel, confession,

and the holy sacrament. Later, I expounded the Acts of the Apostles, and the several articles of the Augsburg Confession. According to my experience, it is not desirable to go through whole books of the Bible at the beginning of a series of prayer-meetings ; it is better to dwell simply on the way of salvation, and illustrate it by narrative. This is more easily impressed upon the memory, and tells more on daily life. Many who attended my meetings had, indeed, during their preparation for confirmation, been taught the catechism, but in a manner that had left the way of life obscure to their minds, and others had entirely forgotten all they had once learned. The one question to which a clear and definite answer must be returned in the course of every prayer-meeting is this : ‘What must I do to be saved ?’ The continuous exposition of whole books is very well for more advanced congregations ; but where spiritual life is just beginning to stir, the main point is to insist upon conversion, and to give illustrations taken from the history of missions and of daily life. A few annual reports of the Basle Missionary Institution rendered me good service, and I found anecdotes there that I had to repeat over and over again, the people took such delight in hearing them.

After a few weeks of this course, a few individuals were awakened to repentance, and their concern for their souls was such that they wept abundantly, and spent hours on their knees imploring the Divine mercy. Many of them came to me, but it was very



hard to comfort them. 'Our sins are too many,' they would say; 'we have sinned against the Holy Spirit, we are lost, we cannot appropriate forgiveness;' these were their constant complaints. Their anguish was complicated too with doubts as to whether ours was the true church, and some of them went to Ehrenström, who continued to haunt the neighbouring villages, and heard from him that salvation was impossible in our communion. Accordingly, some seceded for the second time, and were received by Ehrenström; and their formal reception, their severance from all old ties and associations, and their belonging to a party which was always speaking of its persecution, often tended to impress them with an idea of having obtained peace, upon which they proclaimed that the United Church was forsaken by the Holy Spirit, and did all they could to agitate the minds of others. A schoolmaster applied to Ehrenström, and was, of course, at once required to forsake the false church, to which requisition he replied, 'I have a wife and several children; what am I to live upon?' 'First of all come over to us,' said Ehrenström, 'and if you and your family are left to hunger, then throw your Bible at the feet of the Lord God, and tell him that he has lied.' A young man who was greatly distressed by continual temptations to curse and blaspheme the Lord Jesus, and by profane and horrible dreams, also went to Ehrenström, who told him that he was possessed by Satan, and bade him go to his

pastor, and ask him to cast him out, adding, 'I tell you beforehand that he will not be able to do so, for Satan has all power in the United Church, and the priests have neither courage nor power to cast him out.' The poor fellow came to me, and I prayed with him, but he got no comfort, upon which he went back to Ehrenström, and his family reported that he had returned from him more composed, though in a very silent and abstracted mood. The following morning, however, he was found dead, having hanged himself in the stable.

During the prayer-meetings there was frequently such loud sighing and groaning that it was almost insufferable. Many fainted, and had to be carried out, and even people of quiet and reasonable character could not resist the contagion. I was often obliged to stop and earnestly request them to control themselves. For many evenings there would be perfect stillness, and then came another outbreak. One striking thing was that some desired to be carried out and laid upon the graves. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ardently desired, and so far as I can recollect it was during its reception that the first cases got peace. Without any suggestion on my part, an earnest need arose for private confession, which, indeed, had always been a custom in the old Lutheran Church. At first but few came, then numbers: so that these were to me very perplexing and painful times. Every one liked to come secretly to the

parsonage, and several would arrive as late as after ten o'clock in the evening ; the circumstantiality with which they dwelt upon their sins and their life in general took up much time, so that it was often past midnight before I could take off my clothes and lay my weary body down to rest. We often hear of the innocence of peasants, but oh with what abominations I became acquainted ! Dishonesty and unchastity were the two most prevalent sins ; but, on the other hand, there were some who seemed to be looking out for something to accuse themselves of, and made sins of the merest trifles. The anguish of those who had sinned against the departed was especially great. Old people would tell of faults that they had committed against long buried parents. For my own part I felt that hearing these confessions increased my own self-knowledge, and stimulated me to increased prayer. My excitement reached such a pitch as frequently to deprive me of all sleep. There is something contagious in our intercourse with people in such distress. Then, again, I was often in the greatest perplexity as to what was to be done with the stolen goods brought to me. It is by no means desirable in every case that the offender should openly confess this fault. There are circumstances in which one must dissuade from such a step. A boy came to me who was apprenticed to a shoemaker, whom he had cheated of two groschen, and I enjoined him to confess this and make restoration, believing the man

to be sensible and right-minded, whereas he punished the poor lad and sent him away. Again, with regard to breaches of conjugal fidelity, it is always a dangerous thing to confess such to the offended party, even where both are converted people.

My position in regard to neighbouring pastors became at this time a very difficult one. The attendance of many of their parishioners at my prayer-meetings was looked upon with disapprobation, but when these began to wish me to administer the Sacrament to them, I was obliged positively to decline, else the whole movement would have had something of a personal and party character. I found it the more easy to do this, that Luther has laid it down that the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister has nothing to do with the efficacy of the Sacrament.

It is very difficult to give any definite and intelligible description of the character of the movement as a whole. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound of it, but no one knows exactly whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. At first there was a great tendency to Methodism amongst the people. One would ask the other for the date of his spiritual birth, insist upon his being able to give the day and hour of his conversion, to repeat how long his period of repentance and distress had lasted, when he had laid hold on Christ's merits, and the like. Special emphasis was laid on the duration and intensity of the period of remorse. Then arose a very energetic

dispute whether in conversion repentance or faith comes first, and, as is so often the case, the whole difficulty arose from a confusion of terms. The question was referred to me, and was only decided by a thorough exposition of the subject at the prayer-meetings. At that time there was a Jewish family residing in the parish ; they too were drawn into the current of popular feeling, and came to the meetings. I see plainly before me now the figure of one venerable old Jew as he lay on his face on the altar-steps and implored forgiveness of his sins. For a long time this little band of Jews went on coming to me on a Sunday evening, and I used to read them all the Messianic passages in the Old Testament. But then arose the question whether a Jew could be converted and saved without being baptized, and this led to much controversy on the subject of baptism. Upon one occasion when I was unavoidably obliged to be absent, and the clerk accordingly had to read, the sermon that he chose, though a very good one, did not happen to treat the doctrine of the Sacrament in the Lutheran fashion. I was very late returning home, but I found several people waiting there for me, and had to promise them that the book should very seldom be read, as it contained false doctrine. On another occasion a young preacher gave great dissatisfaction, being understood to say that sanctification constituted justification before God.

One thing that much struck me was the confidence

the people felt in their own state of grace. That they had been really awaked and called by the Lord was as certain to them as that they lived, their only anxiety was lest by their faithlessness they should fall from their present state. While the more cultivated brethren felt some difficulty in distinguishing between normal moral influences and the work of the Spirit, these were on the other hand, distinctly conscious of having entered upon an entirely different state, a new world ; light had suddenly broken in upon their darkness, so that they were generally able to give pretty exactly the date of their spiritual birth.

Another characteristic feature was their great confidence in intercessory prayer ; I have often heard them while they prayed, very humbly, but very boldly, plead God's promises before His throne, perfectly secure that He would grant their petitions. 'Thou canst not help it,' they would say ; 'Thou hast sworn it to us ; Thou must needs keep Thy word, for Thou art true ; Thou hast Thyself mercifully tied Thine own hands,' etc. Intercession was constantly requested, generally during the prayer-meetings, and in the following manner : Two groschen were wrapped up in a bit of paper, on which was written, 'The congregation is earnestly requested to put up prayer, that the Lord will be merciful to my son, my brother, neighbour, daughter, etc., and enlighten and convert him or her,' as the case might be. The name of the petitioner was not given, but these

bits of paper were generally handed over to me by little children, though sometimes the parties themselves brought them, praying for secrecy. Here is a case in point. An industrious and well-conducted man came to settle amongst us, who did not attend the prayer-meetings, and but seldom came to church. His two neighbours on each side of him, were, as they expressed it, seized with tender love for him, and determined to put up daily intercessions for him, and, meanwhile, to do him every possible kindness and service in their power. When at length they heard through his children, that it was his intention to go to the prayer-meeting on Wednesday evening, they requested intercession to be made for a very dear neighbour. They met him on the way, sat one on each side of him, kept praying for him the whole time, and when the whole congregation knelt down to take part in the intercessory prayer, the man who was the subject of it felt so impressed and shaken, that he came to me late that very evening in great spiritual concern, to seek comfort for his soul. Again, there was an Inspector in the neighbourhood, who was much given to ridicule all pious people. One evening he saw an old lame woman, who bore an excellent character, limping to the prayer-meeting, for which he found great fault with her, declaring she might employ the time much better. She replied that she had a soul to be saved, which so offended the man, that he struck at her with his riding-whip.



Not far off was a large stone, beside which she knelt down, and prayed that, having been counted worthy to receive a blow for the Lord's sake, she might be preserved from vain-glory, and that the Inspector might be awakened to repentance. A fervent love for the man, had, she averred, taken possession of her soul. Before the service began she came to me, and requested a special intercession. Now, it so happened that the inspector had long had a curiosity to see how these meetings were carried on, besides which, his master had requested him to attend one and report to him, so as he happened to have the time, he made his appearance among us that very evening. The subject under consideration was the First Commandment, and the true and living God was contrasted with the god of this world. The man dressed in frock-coat, with spurs on, and riding-whip in his hand, came rather late, found no room, and had to stand in the passage ; but the lame old woman saw him, and her 'fervent love' impelled her to fervent prayer. When the intercession was about to be put up he knelt down with the rest, and from that time forth he was never absent from a prayer-meeting, and showed kindness to the old woman. Here is a third example: The son of a very old widow, who was serving as a soldier, returned to pay his mother a visit. A quarrel arose between them ; the poor woman came to me bleeding from a blow her son had given her, and requested prayer to be made that God

would forgive his grievous sin. When the congregation knelt down the young man remained standing, but he was pricked in his heart,—a hollow sound startled us as we prayed. He had fallen down senseless, and had to be carried out.

The conventicles of former days now revived, and were more visited than ever. I had to preach four times every Sunday, and had other ministerial work besides, but I took great pleasure in going on the Sunday evening to one or other of these assemblies, and listening to their fervent prayers. When one who had long been absent appeared among them again, they had a habit of raising the hymn, ‘Hallelujah, praise and honour!’ I determined to do all I could to raise still further the two dear brethren, now in glory, who led the conventicle worship, in the general estimation, by appointing them to receive the collections and free-will offerings at the prayer-meetings, and, to the best of their judgment, to dispense them among the poor of the congregation. They were not indeed preachers, but they had salt in themselves, and happy is the pastor who finds such coadjutors.

I advise all pastors, indeed, to appoint faithful and judicious men to receive the sums collected, and to trust them implicitly in the disposal of them. Nothing could exceed the interest these worthies that I speak of took in their office ; I have seen them stand with folded hands in thankful delight if they happened to find a large coin in the bag. I never

had occasion to regret having unreservedly made over the application of these funds to them, nor do I remember a single instance of dissatisfaction amongst the community at large. The Conventicles, moreover, had a certain kind of discipline of their own, for, much as they insisted on the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet they did not overlook sanctification, and were very thorough in their renunciation of worldly pleasures. I remember a girl, who had had a pretty shawl given her on New Year's Day by her mistress, evincing extreme delight in wearing it, but at the next celebration of the Lord's Supper she brought it as a free-will offering to the Church, because, as she said, she wanted to keep herself from all idols.

Nevertheless we had no lack of sorrowful experiences either, connected with the movement. Apart from the backsliders, who for a short time ran well, then relapsed into their old ways, there were those who fell into profound melancholy, and our doctor often spoke of *mania religiosa*. We had three cases of the kind at once. Added to this, some fearful events gave rise to the most painful rumours. Two girls who had misconducted themselves, and then during their pregnancy professed themselves converts, could not endure the shame that awaited them; they concealed their condition, and were eventually tried and condemned for child-murder. No doubt an ungodly girl can far more easily get over both the

sin and its consequences than a poor creature who, though she has yielded to temptation, still fears God. But the Lord takes count of the tears shed upon earth, and preserves them against the day of judgment; we may be sure that the tears of a poor girl treacherously robbed of her honour and her peace, will weigh heavily in the scale against her betrayer. It makes one very indignant to hear the light tone in which many young men dwell upon their own infamous successes of this kind. He who has seen the heartbreak of respectable parents, and of the poor daughter whom they have brought up in the sweat of their brows, cannot help vividly recalling the solemn words: 'Woe unto men because of offences; it were better for such a one that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the depths of the sea.' It is noticeable that villains of this class frequently fix upon the very girls who are the most modest in demeanour, and the most afraid of shame. Landed proprietors and men in office ought to keep a most strict watch over their agents and subordinates in this matter. One single libertine may not only bring misery into some particular family, but thoroughly corrupt all the youth of the district by his immoral conversation and example. I could repeat most horrifying facts that have come to my knowledge under confession, but this is not the proper place for them. It is this sin most especially that deepens the great gulf between the kingdom of God and

of the world, and binds a man in the most degrading chains. Should such a hireling of Satan come into a parish, the pastor must be on his guard, must day by day accuse him to God and man, till at length he goes elsewhere or changes his ways.

A rumour now spread around, and reached the ears of the authorities, that the lights were put out in the church after evening service, and that the large assembly crawled on their knees round the altar, and conducted themselves most indecorously. This report grew so appalling that at length an inquiry was instituted, which, of course, exposed its falsehood, and only helped on the movement. It seemed that a neighbouring pastor who belonged to the Reformed Church could not bear the almost entire desertion of his people, and that therefore he had set on foot this accusation. In consequence of what came out during the inquiry, he had to give up his post. The president of the province himself came, and got all possible information on the spot as to the character of the movement, and I have thankfully to acknowledge his justice and impartiality. Another of my difficulties arose from Ehrenström having so vilified the Reformed Church, that many of its members became seriously unhappy about its soul-destroying error. Now, just as a member of the Government had arrived to obtain information respecting all that had occurred, a widow belonging to the Reformed Church came to me, and said, 'Mr. Pastor, I am come to tell you that

henceforth I mean to be a Lutheran.' I replied, 'Oh, mother D——, remain as you are ; you know that you have a monthly allowance from the poor-box of the Reformed Church, and you will lose that if you leave it.' 'I know that,' said she, 'but I want to be saved.' I tried to point out her folly in speaking as though salvation were not possible in the pale of the Reformed Church ; to which she replied, 'Ay, ay, I know of old people used to be saved in it, but it's not so now-a-days.' In short, nothing could induce her to give up her purpose. It was natural that the lying spirit should take advantage of such follies as these to stir up the old animosity between Lutherans and Reformed.

Great as the labour was that I had to undergo at this time, the Lord gave me strength sufficient for it, and I only remember being on one occasion too overwrought to find myself refreshed by the very few hours that I was able to spend in bed. The strict *surveillance* that every member of the congregation exercised over others, and which I could not escape any more than the rest, was, I must own, somewhat inconvenient at times, though no doubt it had its good side. Here is an instance of it. I was particularly fond of chess, which I had few opportunities of playing. A deaf and dumb artist was in the habit of paying me a visit on Sunday afternoons after the second service, and as to converse with him was very laborious, and he played chess remarkably



well, we had on one occasion a game. One of the members of my flock chanced to come in while it was going on, and looked askance at our employment. The following morning the two worthy men I have spoken of as the leaders of the conventicle, came in very solemnly attired in their Sunday coats, to inquire whether it was true that I was playing with wooden dolls on the Sabbath afternoon. I confessed it was, and they prayed to be allowed to see the dolls. After looking at them closely, they asked me whether it was not a sin to amuse myself in such a way on the Sunday, and when I would not allow that it was, they replied, 'To play with painted dolls (cards) is certainly a sin ; how then can it be otherwise than sinful to play with carved dolls?' I endeavoured to convince them of the innocence of the relaxation, but they held to their point. 'We will not then discuss with you,' they said, 'whether it be a sin or be not a sin, but in any case we will entreat you not again to play with these wooden dolls.' And as I paused a little before I would consent to their wishes, they went on, 'Look you, to eat meat is certainly no sin, and yet St. Paul says, I will eat no meat so long as I live, rather than make my brother to offend. If, then, St. Paul could give up meat, you may well promise to give up playing with wooden dolls, because they give offence to others.' Upon that I yielded ; they gave me their hands, formally pronounced the pledge, and when I



had repeated it, they knelt down and thanked God for having guided me aright. But, however, they took my poor chess-men away, and gave them to my little boy with full permission to play with them with the stick he had in his hand. Again, a man discovered to be in the habit of working for money on the Sunday, was solemnly rebuked and required to leave off doing so, and when he refused he was forbidden to attend the Sunday evening meetings. This, however, he found so painful that he requested my intercession with his offended brethren.

Dealing with the converted is, as I have before said, a very difficult part of a pastor's duty ; and unless he has a pretty accurate knowledge of the natural man, he will never know how to deal with the spiritual. There is a great difference between the treatment required by old and young converts, by those who, before their conversion, have led grossly immoral or outwardly respectable lives ; by people of sanguine or phlegmatic temperament, of lively imagination or matter-of-fact, prosaic character. It is also most important to ascertain whether they have received good impressions in youth, or have been brought up in ignorance of God and his Word. Neither are physical conditions to be overlooked ; and those who suffer from indigestion or hypochondriasis will be found especially difficult to manage, and will require much tender allowance. In short, terrible mistakes may be made without the utmost

caution, and a thorough acquaintance with original character, or in Scripture language, *the old man*, for it is with him that the battle has to be waged, and it is in him that the strength of temptation lies. He is not dead, he is only wounded and bound. Our task must be to restore and sanctify the original powers and tendencies of the man, so as to make the members that were servants of unrighteousness and sin servants of holiness (Rom. vi. 19). Were I to enter at large into this subject, I should be led too far; I will only make one general remark. The minister must show very great caution in comforting his penitents. A man of considerable experience once remarked of Ehrenström, 'He comforts them all, be they ever so lame and crooked.' No doubt there is always some cause of joy in that people believe themselves awakened; but St. Peter's rule, that Christians should make their election sure by 'all diligence,' must be strenuously insisted upon. It is only towards the old that we may be a little lavish of encouragement, because they have such difficulty in attaining to peace. I knew an old man who bore a bad character, come under strong conviction when he was much past seventy, but he could not find peace. I met him once weeping in the fields; and when I asked him whether he could not believe that the blood of the Lord Jesus had power enough to save him, he replied, 'Yes, I do believe it; but the lost years cry out behind me, the lost years, the lost

years.' I reminded him of the labourers called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, who yet received every man his penny. 'Alas!' he exclaimed, 'the Lord's mercy is indeed very great, but it is so hard to believe that an old sinner can be saved!' In short, we can never repeat too frequently to the young that, although it is not impossible that an old sinner should be saved, yet that it is very difficult, and rarely comes to pass; and when it does, the old man or woman can hardly ever attain to perfect peace. Old wounds easily break out anew, and occasion grievous pain.

Above all, we must insist upon the fruits of genuine repentance, restitution, reconciliation, confession, self-denial, and forsaking of the old and besetting sin, be it what it may. Also there must be great diligence shown in using all the means of grace. We must exhort our converts to let the Word of God dwell in them richly, to learn their catechism anew, to commit to memory texts and hymns, and to look upon conversion as a daily work. Many, we find, have a strong tendency to passive indolence. Those who are satisfied with a sweet conviction of being saved, must be earnestly reminded that fear and trembling belong to the Christian life, and stirred up to diligence and to the recollection of their sinful nature. But as there are, and ever will be, on earth, the rich and the poor, so indeed it is in the kingdom of heaven. There are some who will cry

*Kyrie eleison* to their last day, and some who will sing Halleluiah. Some eat the bread of tears ; others are fed with sweet food. But the Word of God is especially for the consolation of the mourners. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit,’ says the Lord ; and it is written that ‘they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.’ There are many who are full of zeal for the conversion of others, while it is all their pastor can do to keep them in any proper subjection and humility. The cunning and hypocrisy of the natural heart is very subtle in such cases.

Meanwhile the pastor must not forget that he does not merely belong to the awakened, but to the community at large.

He will no doubt find some who are anxious to take entire possession of his thoughts and time, and absorb him entirely in their own pious circle. Such people will be annoyed at his having any intercourse with the worldly-minded, or preaching in any other tone than their own. But there is a duty implied in the apostle’s words, ‘all things to all men,’ which we must by no means overlook. If the pastor looks upon the converted only as his flock, it will lead to an open split in the community, which will be injurious to the religious movement itself, and occasion its standing still, as events have, alas ! recently shown. According to my belief, borne out by experience, it is very dangerous to confine any praiseworthy undertaking to the converted or half converted.

The so-called Christian associations, apart from the great body of the people, effect little good. I hardly know whether I was right in resisting the organization of any special missionary society, but my beloved successor certainly erred in his warm encouragement of such. The Church in her healthy character does the work of these societies spontaneously: the good tree brings forth good fruit. These so-called missions, however well-intentioned, will always have a tendency to set themselves in opposition to the Church, and if the pastor decline unconditionally to follow their lead, dissensions and discontent arise. The contributions to missionary undertakings flow in very abundantly without the aid of a special society, and the poor and the sick are duly and kindly cared for by their families and neighbours. Once a benevolent family built a home in our country for old invalids, and I remember the remark it elicited amongst our people: 'Such a home can only be of use to those who have no kith or kin.' This institution at length became a refuge for the orphan boys of the whole circle. Religious societies are very useful in large parishes, and may there form desirable centres from whence spiritual life may radiate, but in a small community their disadvantages outweigh their advantages. They lead to the one great point, the awakening of the whole community, becoming too often a secondary consideration, and they minister to the self-righteousness and self-complacency of a small number.

For a man's character may undergo a great outward improvement without his having experienced a thorough conversion of the heart, and such a one will always be easily puffed up.

The pastor must not forget that while to some the Word of God is a savour of life unto life, to others it proves the savour of death unto death, and he must seek to keep himself clean from the blood of those who perish. On the other hand, no man can convert another, therefore he must beware of thinking, or allowing others to think, too highly of his influence. Parents will often require of him that he should lead their grown-up sons and daughters into a new and better way, but there is nothing youth dislikes so much as constraint, and we must beware above all of forcing upon the young the adoption of formulas which for them have no real meaning at all. But, indeed, according to my experience, boys and youths often pretend to be much more irreligious than they really are, and seek to conceal their genuine convictions from a false shame, more especially if they see any great anxiety shown by their elders about their regular attendance at church, or their taking part in family worship. They, for their part, pique themselves upon the amount of their smoking and drinking, their bodily strength and prowess. But the pastor should be able to see below the surface, and rather exhort parents to patience and prayer, than provoke the young to run into still further excesses out of very

opposition. They have a consciousness that the giving their hearts to the Lord must be a free-will offering, and resist all attempts made to force their affections. Besides, there is very great danger in young people anticipating, as it were, their own religious experience, and nothing can be so fearful as the accustoming them to hypocrisy. Moreover the relation of the individual soul to God is always a sacred mystery, and the young are especially sensitive as to any intermeddling of others therein. Praying parents need not afflict or alarm themselves, but let them see to it that they are decided in insisting upon all such obedience as they may lawfully claim. Authority is constantly lost because parents try to exert it beyond its proper bounds, and are inclined to waive it within them. Pious parents, indeed, will sometimes draw a distinction between positive injunctions and earnest exhortations, but young people do not see much difference between the two, and look upon the latter but as a kinder form of command.

The pastor will always have a very painful and difficult office to perform towards those who consider themselves reprobate, guilty of the unpardonable sin, or unworthy of the Lord's Supper. I would premise however, that physical conditions, especially derangement of the digestive organs, will constantly be found at work in such cases, and that the pastor's part will be to direct sufferers to the physician, though they will generally reject this advice, under the impression



that their depression and despair roots entirely in want of faith. They point to instances of sudden joy in believing attained by others, and are discouraged by the contrast of such experiences with their own. I remember a case of a deeply concerned and depressed man insisting upon his wife accompanying him to the prayer-meeting. She did so, but on her homeward way she discussed the people she had seen there in a thoughtless manner, which much pained her husband. During the night, however, she woke with a loud scream, and related a fearful dream that she had of a burning spot on the wall which spread and spread till it became a fiery abyss, while a voice cried out, 'Hither wilt thou come unless thou art converted.' A great terror fell upon her; I was called in, and found her in a high state of feverish excitement, which all my attempts were powerless to allay, but that very evening she came to me in great delight, praising and thanking God for having forgiven her all her sins, and given her peace for Christ's sake. The poor husband on the contrary, became more and more unhappy, looked upon his condition as hopeless, and began to apply all Scripture passages that treat of election to the proving himself reprobate. Many are the temptations of physical want, but spiritual poverty is the saddest thing of all. There are the gifts of God free to all, there are the means of grace open to all, and yet such a disparity in spiritual condition! Why should this be? God only knows

why he has given to this man one talent, to that other two, and why to one should be appointed the sowing in tears, to another the reaping in joy. Meanwhile the best thing we can do is, as much as possible, to keep these depressed brethren busily employed in their earthly calling, to enjoin regularity in all means of grace, and to give them every opportunity of doing whatever lies within their power to further God's cause. It is very good for such to be employed in visiting the sick and dying ; in seeking to comfort these they will practically attain more and more to comfort themselves ; they will discover that their godly sorrow is a proof, though a painful one, of their state of grace. One should have great patience and tender sympathy with people of this stamp. It is no easy matter always to remain a miserable sinner, always to live as a dependent beggar, always to feel one's weakness and one's wretchedness. A few weeks of such conscious destitution may be patiently borne, but long years of it are a heavy burden. Not to see and yet to believe, not to feel and yet to believe, is hard to the natural heart, which would fain have some little righteousness of its own to bring before the Lord, and would fain experience also somewhat of His gracious approval.

As I have said before, when children are born there is always much crying, much weakness, much sickness, and great patience is required in the nursing and rearing of them. We must make a mother's love in

the care of her puny and suffering infant our study. At a time of revival there must unavoidably be much that is morbid and spasmodic. I had I know peculiar trouble with those whose conviction was a very sudden thing. For instance, young people would come and attend the prayer-meetings out of mere curiosity. At first they paid little attention to what was going on, soon they grew more earnest, then they began to sigh very deeply, and finally, many of them fell down in strong convulsions, and had to be carried out. I know no other expression to use, than that the spiritual excitement seemed to be contagious. During their convulsions the converts would use many unintelligible words, but they would also describe the plague of their own hearts very forcibly, and cry out for grace and mercy. Many there were too who were grievously tormented by the devil, and complained of having the most fearful visions. Some looked upon themselves as having been actually possessed in past years while committing different sins; others could plainly see the devil within them at the present time, tempting them to evil. A poor ragged mechanic from Bavaria, came one Wednesday afternoon to our village, and asked for work from a tradesman, whose wife took compassion on the wanderer, and set something to eat before him, requiring however that he should say a prayer beforehand. This he declined, but when he was expressly informed that he could have the food on no other terms, he

made an attempt to repeat the Lord's Prayer, but found he had forgotten it. When evening came, the tradesman requested the stranger to accompany him to the prayer-meeting, but received for reply, that he had made a vow never to enter a church again, to which the good man rejoined, that it was indeed folly to make such a resolve, but far greater folly to keep it, and finally announced, that unless the man consented to go he would obtain no work from him. They entered just as I was describing the return of the prodigal, how he stood on the summit of the last hill and saw the forsaken father's home lying before him, he meanwhile without shoes on his feet, in ragged clothes, and overwhelmed with distress and shame ; the remembrance of the happy youth spent in that home drawing him on, fear of his father's displeasure holding him back, till at length, though still a great way off, his father saw him, ran to meet him, etc. Suddenly, the young stranger fell down, his limbs were frightfully convulsed, he foamed at the mouth, and hideous sounds were heard. A shudder ran through the assembly, some screamed, others fell on their knees and prayed aloud for mercy. The poor creature was carried out. I watched beside him all night, and had a doctor called in to attend him. At length he grew more composed, and seemed as though he would gladly listen to prayer, but his face was soon distorted and his limbs convulsed again. If I commanded him very loudly in the name of the Lord Jesus to be still,

he would be quiet for a little time. Towards the morning he fell asleep, lying with hands folded, apparently much exhausted. But the next night the tradesman called me up, for he could not tolerate the way the youth was going on, tearing and raging all over the house. When I came, I found the stove broken to pieces, and the bed on which he lay torn to shreds, with the feathers scattered around. He maintained that the devil had done it; he had sold himself to the devil, who would never let him go. I scolded him severely, and told him he should be bound if he went on in such a mischievous way. As long as I remained with him he was quiet, but his paroxysms threatened to return each time I tried to leave him. Several pious men took to watching him at night till he grew better and began to work. Still he often complained of severe temptations to blasphemy and contempt of the holy sacrament. However, his gift of prayer, and his facility in writing hymns, won him favour at the conventicle. His undutiful conduct to his mother often pressed upon his conscience, and all of a sudden he was seized with a strong yearning for home. One morning he came and told me that his mother had called him loudly during the night, and that he positively must set out to go to her. While he was getting himself ready, and a collection being made for him amongst the community, he received a letter from his sister announcing the death of his mother, who had longed intensely for him during her last hours.

Later, he went over to worthy Pastor Gossner, who sent him out as a missionary, if I remember rightly, to Australia.

Religious books were much sought after at this time, more especially old ones, for modern works were generally suspected of being unsound. The spirit of speculation amongst Jews was oddly developed in connexion with this fact. A Jew went round in the more remote villages, bought up old homilies and hymns, and then betook himself to a community in which there had been a revival, and sold his wares to great profit. I have myself heard him, in order to recommend his goods, read out with great pathos to the bystanders passages treating of the depravity of human nature, and of redemption through Christ's blood. The sermons of Schubert and Brastberger; the Pastoral Hymns of Kleinert; the Way to Heaven, by Werner; the Times of Refreshing, by Müller; Bogatzky's Treasury, and Starke's Prayer Books, were the works most greedily sought after.

As I had at this time to preach four sermons on Sunday, as well as to hold my Wednesday evening service, and was not unfrequently called upon to speak at a meeting in some private house besides, it was impossible that I should always write down or even very carefully prepare my discourses. To preach the same sermon twice did well enough, but three times was rather too much, and four times quite out of the question, when I had to preach



twice to the same congregation. In my former cures, where I had to preach three times in different churches, I had been accustomed carefully to prepare one sermon, and to plan a second one pretty completely. In the first year I devoted my chief attention to a course of sermons on the gospel for the day, in the second to the epistles, and during the third year I made choice of detached texts. In these three cures the hours of divine service alternated between eight, eleven, and one. Accordingly, in whichever church the earliest service was held I delivered my most carefully composed discourse, in the next that which I had only sketched out, and in the third I repeated the sermon that had seemed to make the most impression. When it came to my preaching four times a day, I had to prepare three separate discourses, and in the afternoon I generally chose some section of the Catechism for my subject. The attempt to substitute catechising for the afternoon sermon, however, did not answer, the congregation expressing their decided preference for the latter. I have been often asked how it was possible for mind or body to undergo such fatigue, and this is my reply : As to bodily strength I protest I never found it once taxed, either in the great heat of summer or the still more extreme cold of winter. Only I had to make one fixed rule, and that was to eat as little as possible between sermons, and, if I could get time for it, nothing refreshed me so much as a little nap before



the afternoon service. And as to any excessive mental wear and tear, I equally reject the idea. The varied experiences of the week afforded me by my intercourse with the awakened, the tempted, and the sick, invariably opened out to me new views of the misery of our state by nature, the wondrous dealings of God with souls, and the converting power of his Word. The more intimately I knew individual cases, and their special needs, the more easy I found it to extract from the text before me something appropriate either for their warning or consolation. My long sight was of great use to me in this, I could read upon the countenances of my more devout hearers the impressions made upon their hearts, and thus I felt myself as it were *en rapport* with them, and the train of my thoughts grew more distinct and vivid. In short, once in the pulpit, having given out the text, and looked down upon the loved and familiar faces, materials never failed me.

The prayer-meetings, however, required more preparation than the sermons. When I saw people coming from a distance, after all the burden and heat of a laborious day, saw how farm-servants would go on Wednesday mornings to their work before day-break in order to gain permission from their masters to attend the meeting in the evening, I could not but feel deeply humbled and betake myself to prayer. How poor and empty and anxious I have often felt when I first entered the prayer-meeting, but as soon

as I heard the loud and beautiful singing, and saw the crowd hungering and thirsting after righteousness stand around the altar, I could lift up my heart in confidence to the Lord, and feel that if not for my sake, yet for the sake of those poor souls, he would have mercy on me. I do not remember seeing one single person asleep during these prayer-meetings.

The selection of a detached text is always a difficult and perplexing thing. Generally speaking I have found that sermons on the gospel for the day were the most popular, both because the subject was more familiar, and also because it served as a sort of date. Country people have a habit of saying, when this or that gospel comes round such and such work has to be done, or in the week following this or that gospel, this or that child was born, died, etc. Once when I had given a long course of sermons on the epistles, the bailiff came to me in the name of the congregation to beg I would take up the Evangelists again, as they wished to remain an evangelical congregation, and because it was plain from their sermon books that in old times ministers always preached from the gospels. Generally speaking I used to let myself be guided in my choice of a detached text by a reference to the leading idea of the particular Sunday ; for each Sunday has by its position in the sacred year, and by the connexion between its epistle and gospel, some special significance of its own. There is wonderful ingenuity displayed in the con-

struction of our services, and the more carefully we examine into the reasons why this epistle was associated with that gospel, and both appointed to this particular Sunday, the easier we shall find it to choose a text in harmony with the proper spirit of the day.

There is another point that I cannot pass over, namely, the great importance of punctuality in beginning divine service both in the parish church and the chapel-of-ease. Unpunctuality on the part of the minister is an inexcusable act of impoliteness to the congregation, and invariably tells upon their attendance. I know indeed how many difficulties there are ; the roads are bad, the clocks differ, there is a baptism here, a visitation of the sick there, all manner of hindrances, in short ; but I also know that they all give way before a proper resolve to do right in this particular. For my own part, in order to cut myself off from all possibility of unpunctual habits, I gave the sacristan directions always to begin at the proper moment, whether I was there or not ; and the consequence was that I generally arrived a little before my time. This strict rule of mine was gratefully acknowledged, and it never occurred to any one to try to detain me at either place of worship ; but if a parishioner had something urgent to say, he jumped into the carriage, and drove a little way with me. Besides, I was in the habit of paying a weekly visit to the district-school ; and as it got known through

the children that I was there, people took advantage of that opportunity of consulting me. In winter-time, when the roads were, in my faithful servant's opinion, too heavy for the carriage, we used both to ride off early, often in the dark, he carrying the lantern, and I following ; but in summer he used to be glad to remain at home, so I went off alone, but he never failed to rouse me in such excellent time, that I was generally a quarter of an hour too soon. Indeed, punctuality on the part of the pastor is, on all occasions, indispensable ; at baptisms, marriages, but, above all, at funerals, he should never have to be waited for. Least of all should he ever let himself be delayed by a visit to the patron, or to any kind of dignitary, such indifference to the feelings of the people, and care for his own comforts, being always resented as a bad sign. He who keeps his flock waiting for him unsettles them, till at length they hardly know when they themselves ought to be ready, the pastor being always late. I remember a member of a certain congregation begging his pastor to be sure and come early, and when the latter made sundry excuses, the man replied, ' But when you are invited to dine with the quality, you always get there in right time.' Unless one can have proper command over one's-self, one is liable to observations of this kind. In many congregations the impropriety of coming into church late has become customary. The building is positively almost empty at the beginning of the service, and people drop in after the

Liturgy, or during the last psalm. But how can the pastor remonstrate if he himself has set the example of unpunctuality?

The revival of which I have been treating exercised a very favourable influence over the schools. The school had become an isolated concern; the civil authorities looked upon it as a heavy burden, always requiring fresh outlay, now for the repair of the schoolhouse, now for the maintenance of the schoolmaster. Collisions between the Magistrates and the Educational Board had led to mutual alienation, and even contempt. The schools were universally ill attended; the parents expected no blessing from them for their children; viewed them merely as oppressive institutions, intended to extract money from them, and to unfit their families for useful work. The means employed to correct this impression were fines and even imprisonment for recusant parents, and of course such means defeated themselves. The Separatists were constantly railing against the schoolmaster or the school-books; and even those who did not belong to their body, were glad to quote these objections to justify their own conduct in keeping back their children. The Fibel of Otto Schultz, one of the books prescribed by the authorities, provoked great opposition, on account of the tales and fables it contained, and was denounced as the frivolous Fibel, or the *Union's* Fibel, all abuses whatsoever in church or school being laid to the charge of the Union.

Many, indeed, pertinaciously refused to buy the book, upon the plea that it contained false doctrine, perverted the children from the simplicity of God's Word, and taught them worldly wisdom and cunning; and when at length they were compelled to get it, they cut out all the pages that displeased them, as being unsound; and so, very little was left of the entire Fibel, and the binding looked like a large coat hanging about a thin man. The children used to explain its appearance thus: 'Father has been improving Fibel.' Herr Striez, of the Board of Education, who took a right view of the religious excitement of the time, and warmly sympathized with my difficult position, made a change among the schoolmasters, and four men were appointed to my school who had been most carefully chosen with special reference to the peculiar wants of the day. I, on my part, was not wanting in entreaties and exhortations both from the pulpit and in private houses, and my daily visits to the school were not without effect either; so that gradually the attendance improved. We had a public examination, at which the town representatives and several heads of families were present, and the way the children acquitted themselves on the occasion, removed prejudices that had been widely entertained. Small as were the funds in the power of the managers, yet a considerable present was made to the masters. And so the victory was won, and the general interest in the school received a new and



happy impulse. Every Sunday evening the teachers assembled in my house to discuss in an open and unconstrained manner the circumstances of church and school, one of the party having prepared a short paper upon these, which served as the special subject of our conversation. It was from these friendly conferences that the Preparatory Institute arose, which soon increased and prospered, and was very successful in its labours. It was a real delight to see how its members would vie with each other in instructing each about ten or twelve children of the lower classes. The instruction that they themselves received was obtained either from the schoolmaster or from me, according to their special needs and capabilities.

These members lived in the town, and the small sums they paid for their instruction went to raise the schoolmasters' salaries. The desire that several young people felt to employ their winter evenings in some useful manner led to the establishment of an evening school, which had been previously discussed and approved in our Sunday evening conferences. The interest it excited far surpassed our expectations; even married people and heads of families would come and take their places on the school-benches. Religious history, geography, arithmetic, and letter-writing were the chief subjects of our teaching. A theological candidate, who was my children's domestic tutor, was very zealous in lending his assist-



ance; our excellent organist gave instructions in singing, and he discovered that there were several beautiful voices amongst our young people. The congregational singing, and especially the chanting, gained greatly in consequence, and it became a real delight and means of edification to listen to the beautiful old choral songs. This organist had the tact and good taste to be satisfied with simple music, and not to undertake anything that suggested a fear of the performers breaking down. Great attention was paid to hymns, which were particularly popular among the people. The necessity of teaching needle-work to the girls that attended the evening school led to about twelve ladies uniting for the purpose, and coming twice a week to give instruction in sewing, knitting, cutting-out, etc. As only two of these ladies attended at the same time, it did not much interfere with the domestic duties of any one of them, and their husbands or fathers made no objection. As for the children, they came in great numbers to this evening school, and their parents soon found the benefit and comfort of it.

In this way the school-house was filled almost all the day through, and the school was no longer an unpopular and arbitrary institution, but an object of loving gratitude and solicitude to the congregation. The teachers who readily and cheerfully undertook this increase of work were duly honoured and valued. The people in their own houses and amongst them-

selves spoke respectfully and gratefully of them, and did all they could to support their discipline. I remember these four men with thankfulness, and cannot recal one word of difference ever rising between us. Our regular conferences strengthened our mutual regard and confidence, and also our love and interest in the congregation. Wherever there is life in the church the school is sure to prosper. Wherever the parents love the church, the children love the school also.

In conclusion, I will give two or three sketches of everyday life amongst us at this time.

A man who was living with a woman, not his wife, and was much given to drunkenness, was awakened. The first thing he did was to get properly married, and wholly to give up brandy; but he had been so long used to the stimulant that he had terrible physical suffering to endure from the sudden change, and was only supported by constant prayer. Upon the occasion of a visit that he paid to certain of his relatives, he met with a great deal of ridicule on account of his having grown pious and left off brandy, and at length, to show that he was a free agent, he consented to drink a small quantity. At once the old temptation came upon him in full force, and he got drunk. I have scarcely ever seen a man so downcast and depressed as he was in consequence of this fall, and much time and tender consolation were needed to restore him. He now made a rule of putting by all the money that he would formerly have

consumed in drink. At the end of a year he showed me, with much delight, the amount of his savings, and the new coat that he bought therewith was indeed a true robe of honour.

A woman, whose husband was in the habit of spending his week's wages, in gaming and drinking at the public house, on Saturday evenings, led a very wretched and very quarrelsome married life. But sorrow and God's word together changed her heart; she grew gentle and patient, and bore her heavy cross in a strength not her own. While her husband was at the tavern, she would keep crying to God, who can turn the heart of man at his will. One evening her husband came back earlier than usual; he had got into a dispute with his companion about the game they were playing. From words they had come to blows, and he had been knocked down. His wife received him most kindly, prepared him as good a supper as ever she could, and then took up Starke's prayer-book to read the evening benediction. Her husband listened and then went to bed, but there was no sleep for him that night. He woke his wife saying, 'Mother, I am too wretched, I can bear it no longer; I shall certainly be lost.' The good woman began at once, in full confidence of faith, to return thanks to the Hearer of prayer, while her husband went on imploring grace and forgiveness. With many tears he asked his wife's pardon for all the wrong he had done her, and went to kiss his sleeping children. His wife on her

part confessed with all humility that she had been equally to blame for her quarrelsome temper, and prayed him to forgive her. The next morning at breakfast he burnt his pack of cards. Great was the joy of the poor woman, who used often to declare that she had the best husband in all the world.

The son of a pious man enlisted in a regiment of the guards. His father accompanied him to his quarters, exhorted him to remember his daily prayers, and on parting from him, spoke as follows:—‘My son, if our gracious God brings thy sins to remembrance when thou art among strangers, stand still and take off thy hat, for the Lord is about to speak with thee.’ The young man entered the barracks with the best intentions; at first he was much ridiculed by his comrades on account of his habit of prayer, then he quite left it off and forgot all about it. The first time, however, that he mounted guard, and had to take off his helmet at evening prayer, his father’s words returned to his mind; he prayed in very deed, and the Holy Spirit brought his sins to his remembrance. This was how the turning-point of his life came about, and the letter that he wrote on the subject to his father occasioned much joy and thankfulness in his old home.

On one occasion, it was past midnight when I returned from the district connected with the chapel of ease, where I had been administering the last Sacrament to a dying man. My way lay near the

churchyard ; the moon was shining brightly. I climbed over the wall, and stood for a while beside the grave of the dear child I had recently lost. All at once I heard sighs and groans of great distress, and looking round, found they proceeded from a half-clothed woman, who lay upon one of the neighbouring graves. She was the wife of a drunkard, who had returned home late ; she had quarrelled with him about it, upon which, he had dragged her out of bed and turned her out of doors. Her old and respectable father had over and over again warned her, but in vain. She took to evil courses, and finally married this confirmed toper. Now she lay there crying, ‘ Oh, had I but listened to my old father, alas ! alas ! how much sorrow I gave him.’ In her agony of mind she sought for refuge on her father’s grave. Our sins against those who loved us the most, bring misery in their train. What then must be the sufferings of lost souls who have neglected and despised all the patience, grace, and love of the Lord Jesus, who so often called them, and entreated them in vain !

Although I could easily give many more happy experiences of this remarkable period, I will break off here, and only add in conclusion one anecdote, which is a great favourite of mine.

An old man was sitting in his little room one Sunday afternoon. His Bible lay before him, opened at the blank sheets before the title-page, on which were

written some dates of days and years. He was so absorbed in the contemplation of these that he did not notice the entrance of a neighbour, who asked him what he could find to read with such intense interest, where he saw only a few dates? The old man replied : ‘ Neighbour, could you but know what these dates stand for, you would not be any longer surprised.’ These were the dates of all the principal occurrences of the old man’s life. He pointed with his finger to one after the other. ‘ Here is the date of my birth, of my baptism, of my confirmation, my enlisting, my marriage,’ and so on till at last he came to the date of the day when the Lord had effectually called him, and since which he had known himself to be the child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And then he exclaimed, ‘ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !’ and sang with tears and in a trembling voice :—

‘ Could I a thousand voices raise,  
 A thousand tongues employ,  
 My heart would pour itself in praise,  
 In thankfulness and joy.  
 And still its happy song should be,  
 Hear what the Lord has done for me.’

I pray God that every one of my readers may be able from his heart so to sing !

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